

Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Hoxie Tucker has been one of America's best known circus owners to circus fans in the Midwest and on the east coast. Tucker could call hundreds of fans by name.

A three part article on his career begins in this issue. It is *Bandwagon's* tribute to a great showman.

The photo on the cover was taken by Fred Pfening, Jr. in 1982, Tucker's next to last season as a circus owner.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The extra large Christmas issue of *Bandwagon* allows an ideal opportunity for CHS members to extend holiday greetings to circuses and fellow members. The ad rates are listed in the masthead.

Send your copy, layout and check to the editor by December 1, 1992. Circuses and other professionals are also invited to place their greeting advertisements in this issue.

THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW

The review of the 1992 circus season will appear in the January-February 1993 issue. Your contribution will make the report more comprehensive. Readers and circuses are asked to send photos, black and white if possible, information and newspaper clippings.

Data about smaller shows, school shows, Shrine and fair circuses will be especially

appreciated. Material will be returned if requested. Send information to: Fred D. Pfening III, 2240 Tewksbury Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221.

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The book has a 136 page narrative section, 147 pages of appendix (rosters and routes) and an 18 page index with over 1,000 names. Until January 1, 1993 the price is \$25, postpaid. Thereafter, it will be \$30.00. Available from the author:

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During the truck show era, only a handful of showmen have successfully operated a circus for a prolonged period of time. D. R. Miller holds the record with over fifty years of ownership. Jack Mills, Frank McCloskey, and Cliff Vargas also had long careers. Another member of the select circle was Hoxie Tucker.

Leonard Basil Tucker was born in Somerset, Kentucky on August 7, 1910. His father was known as Big Hox. Young Leonard was a fan of silent movie cowboy Jack Hoxie. He added an "ie" to his father's nickname and from that point on was known as Hoxie.

His career in show business began at age fifteen when he ran off with the Red Path Chattanooga, a rep show that played through Kentucky for many years where he was a prop boy. He grew up on the Red Path show, remaining for twelve years. His second show was the Heffner Vernon Stock Company. He became boss canvasman on this outfit after serving in various capacities.

His wife to be joined the show at age fifteen as a member of the Noble Sisters, an acrobatic dance group. After four years they were married and moved out on their own with a Hawaiian show playing halls during the winter. The following summer Tucker was assistant manager of the Billroy Comedians. Gene Austin, the singer, was Billroy's feature attraction. In mid-season Austin took over the show and Tucker became manager. Tucker managed the show in 1939 and 1940. In 1941 the Tuckers were with the Milt Tolbert dramatic tent until it folded. They then joined the Grand Old Opry tent show out of Nashville, Tennessee. The Tuckers worked for various traveling theatrical shows during the 1940s. A few dates were listed in *Billboard* in 1949 for Hoxie Bros. Circus, his first circus.

In the fall of 1952 Tucker visited Harold J. Rumbaugh in Georgia. Rumbaugh had been half owner of King Bros. Circus in 1947 and 1948, owned the John Pawling show in 1949, and used the Horne Bros. title from 1950 to 1952. The Horne show had dwindled to a small circus which was barely able to stay open. Rumbaugh talked Tucker into taking the show over. Tucker changed the name to Hoxie Bros. and reopened it on November 17, 1952 in Greenville, Florida. The only equipment on the show owned by Tucker was the big top,

The Hoxie TUCKER STORY

Part One

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

seats and the light plant. The show moved on four or five trucks and presented a one ring performance in a sixty foot big top. Tucker later said business was "really bad," but he stayed out all winter. The tour escaped any mention in the *Billboard*.

The next year Tucker, using the circus equipment, returned to what he knew best, the Grand Old Opry tent show.

During the middle 1950s Tucker worked for Milton "Doc" Bartok's Bardex

Leonard Basil Tucker, a real outdoor showman. Cliff Glotzbach photo.



Medicine Company. He was agent, boss canvas-man, electrician and fixer on the show. The Bartok troupe was framed like a dramatic show with a stage at the end of the big top. A variety of acts was presented between medicine pitches by Bartok. From 1958 to 1960 Tucker remained in Miami where he was in the construction business.

By 1961 he again had the itch to get back in show business and Hoxie Bros. Circus returned to the road.

Bartok signed on as contracting agent. Edward Mathers was second contracting agent. Sam Warren was purchasing agent. Betty Bartok was treasurer and had the inside reserve seats. Frank Sil-

verlake and Leonard Grain had the big top. Carl Nelson was concession manager and Lee Bradley managed the side show. A twelve year old elephant, Dinah, and a six horse liberty act were leased from Bill Morris. Evy Karoly presented a principal riding act. The Bradleys and Silverlakes filled out the twelve act performance. The after show included Chip and Doris Morris with posing and dancing horses, Dave Wood's Brahma bull and donkey, and Onions Bradley's whip cracking.

One semi carried the big top poles, seats and marquee. Another semi carried the elephant, the liberty horses and a donkey. A third semi served as the office, concession trailer and sleeper. A straight truck contained the light plant and mechanical department. Another straight truck carried the big top canvas. The cookhouse was on a trailer pulled by the light plant truck. Lee Bradley had two trucks on the show that carried the annex and his horses.

The rolling stock was painted purple and lettered in red. The Hoxie trucks would remain purple for many years. Some years later when asked why he painted his trucks purple Tucker said, "When a truck is lost I can ask filling station owners and town people if they have seen a purple truck."

The show opened in Adele, Georgia on April 8 under a sixty foot push pole big top with three thirty foot middles. Admission was \$1.00 for adults and 50 cents for kids. Reserve seats were 25 cents extra. Seating was on seven high blues, front and back end. Seven high reserve planks were on the front side and back side. The marquee was twenty by twenty feet. Bradley's annex was a twenty footer



with a larger area enclosed by side wall. The midway had a pony ride, ticket trailer, concession joints and a large banner line.

Amusement Business published this short report on May 8: "The new Hoxie Bros. Circus opened last week with L. B. Tucker as owner-manager. Eddie Melon, formally with Hunt, is the canvas boss. The show operates on six morortized units. All show owned trucks are painted lavender.

"The midway includes a snake show. Tex Allen is announcer. Program includes Johnnie and Ann Spitzer, Happy Spitzer, Karl Nelson, Marjorie Spitzer, Jean Nelson, Janet Lee and Tex Allen. Tucker is expecting to go to Peru, Indiana to get an elephant and liberty horses. A one-finger act is to join."

The July 3 *Amusement Business* reported that the show had a wash out at Vandergrif, West Virginia on June 21 and had good business at Derry, Pennsylvania on June 22 for the Jaycees on a date booked only ten days ahead by Don Mathers. An early June date at Fairmont, West Virginia produced banner business with a turn-away for a third performance. The show reported straw houses at Morgantown, West Virginia.

The August 7 *Amusement Business* reported the show was doing well in a swing through Pennsylvania and New

Hoxie Bros. Circus ticket semi in 1961. Bill Elbirn photo.

The Hoxie Bros. Circus midway in 1961. Bill Elbirn photo.

Jersey. The performance included the Timberlake dogs; Christy Haup, web; Evy Karoly, liberty horses; Bozo Franklin, clown; and Chet Morris with his horses and mules. Sam B. Warren was managing the show. Betty Bartok was treasurer and handled tickets. Betty Tucker had the reserve ticket sales. Doc Bartok was ahead of the show in charge of the advance.

The November 13 *Amusement Business* announced that Bartok would combine his medicine show with Tucker's circus and operate as a circus in 1962. The circus was to go out under a 70 by 220 foot cable top with nine show owned trucks. The winter quarters were in Sarasota, Florida on Route 301 between Sarasota and Bradenton. The article noted that Bartok had been partners with Tucker that year, the first mention of a partnership.

1962

Tucker and Bartok formed a new partnership to operate the Hoxie and Bardex Bros. Circus. Each of them contributed equipment and trucks, retaining ownership of their respective property. Tucker contributed the five trucks he had used the prior year. Bartok contributed five trucks he had used on his medicine show.

Bartok bought two elephants, Sabu and Minyak, from Ringling-Barnum and a hippo and semi-trailer cage from Luke Anderson.

Col. Tim McCoy, a Ringling-Barnum feature in the middle 1930s and with Kelly-Miller and Carson & Barnes in the 1950s, was signed as the concert feature. His name was placed on some of the trucks. Six small cages were purchased from Floyd King. A liberty act that had appeared on Carson & Barnes came from Dory Miller. The big top, a seventy foot round bail ring top with three fifties, had been used on the Bartok medicine show. The tent was of unusual construction, using six center poles, four aluminum and two wood. There were no quarter poles. Seven high planks were used for all seating with no grandstand chairs. Music was provided by record using a sound system



One sheet poster used in 1962 by the Hoxie-Bardex show. Pfening Archives.

in a Volkswagen van. A number of the trucks were painted purple and lettered by Roger Boyd.

Bill Elbirn, a circus fan from Bridgeton, New Jersey, had become acquainted with Tucker and Bartok during the 1961 Hoxie tour. During the 1950s Elbirn had set a few dates for Von Bros. and the Beers-Barnes circuses. Bartok asked Elbirn to

The Hoxie-Bardex light plant in 1962. Tim McCoy's name appeared on the truck. Pfening Archives.





A packed midway on the Hoxie-Bardex show in 1962. Cliff Glotzbach photo.

book some dates in the New Jersey area, which was the start of Elbirt's long association with Hoxie Bros. Circus.

Elbirt's contracting was the first instance of a circus fan booking dates in his home area. This worked well and several other fans, including Pete Pepke, Allen Duffield, Al Meredith and Jim Raab, later booked Hoxie dates. At one time Raab was general agent for the Hoxie show. Meredith booked Hoxie New Jersey dates for many years. Elbirt and many of the Hoxie recruits continue to book dates for circuses to this day.

Bartok wrote to Elbirt on March 10, 1962 acknowledging contracts secured by Elbirt for three New Jersey stands. He wrote: "Hoxie and I are of the opinion that we will work about five to six weeks in New Jersey. You can book us as far as September 1 there in New Jersey. We will then work down the coastal plains, through tobacco and cotton, then across Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and some Louisiana, then back along the coast to make some Florida dates and close in Sarasota for the Sheriff's department."

Bartok wrote Elbirt again on April 8 saying: "We have a lot of 20 year or more

Hoxie-Bardex horse and pony semi in 1962. Pfening Archives.



fresh towns in the mountain area, and the advance sales are running very well, all we need is weather. Just received a contract for the Shrine temple at Ashland, Kentucky, the first circus in twenty years. Warren ran into Rossi's agent trying to book Paris, Kentucky for Si Rubens show. Rubens insisted on phones and we said we would as soon not

have phones so we got the date. We are running head on into the King show in Ohio, also Sells & Gray. King has Gallipolis, Ohio and Sells & Gray has some towns booked up in there.

"We pull out of here Tuesday for Valdosta, where we will lay over a couple of days, and then into Adel for the opening on April 14.

"The tent is up here, and we are setting up the midway. Hunkie Johnson is working the rough edges out of the liberty act and they are looking good. He will be with us with his three bear act until late June, then goes to make some fair dates, then comes back in September. Sam Warren is in Middleboro, Kentucky booking dates in that state."

Joe Bradbury visited the show in Roswell, Georgia on April 27 and made these comments in the November-December 1962 *Bandwagon* on the big top interior: "The interior lighting is adequate with wheel clusters of four bulbs each hung between the four aluminum center poles. Two metal poles with four bulb spots are placed around the center ring.

"So as not to place the customer at the end of the long tent at a disadvantage all feature acts do not work in the center ring. The acts alternate in the three rings throughout the performance. No aerial rigging is erected. This is the first time I can remember seeing a big top interior without the first trap, web, ladder or some type of aerial rigging."

The combination side show menagerie was in a sixty foot round top with one thirty which had been the big top on the 1961 Hoxie show.

Bradbury further commented: "The show carried two elephants, Sabu and Minyak, both large Indian females.

These bulls came to this country with the Hugo Schmidt group and had made the recent South American tour with Ringling International Circus. Other lead stock include seven horses, the six liberty horse act and a snow white horse the show purchased for Col. Tim McCoy to ride. Latter is a frisky beauty and the Colonel handled it well. . . .

"The caged animals were housed in five of the six small cages: No. 5 one monkey (yellow), No. 6 one pig (white), No. 8 two monkeys (orange), No. 9 two chickens (blue), No. 14 two rabbits (red). Another small ex-King cage was temporarily empty and a weasel was housed in a small shifting cage.

"All trucks were newly painted and

Newspaper ad used for the opening stand in Adel, Georgia in 1962. Circus World Museum collection.



Herd of performing Elephants, Huge Hippopotamus, Trained Horses, Ponies, Dogs, Monkeys, Wild Animals, Clowns galore, Aerial Acts—ONE DAY ONLY!!!

AFTERNOON AND EVENING SHOWS

Sat., April 14th

Post No. 91 American Legion

**Colonel Tim McCoy
"TV and MOVIE STAR"
"IN PERSON"**



The former Bardex medicine show big top on Hoxie-Bardex in 1962. Pfening Archives.

most of them were lettered and scrolled. The title is painted in either light green, white or yellow. The units were numbered in white or yellow and some cabs were stenciled on the doors HBC. A few of the trucks had the Tim McCoy name as feature attraction painted on them."

The show moved on the following:

1. No. 10 Semi with International tractor. Office, ticket wagon, spare parts, sleeps four in front compartment. Purple.

2. No. 20 Ford light panel. Purple.

3. No. 30 Semi with Ford tractor (ex-Bartok truck). Horses (7) and ponies (6), side show banners on one side. Purple.

4. No. 60 Semi with Ford tractor. Elephants (2) (ex-Bartok truck). Had sleeping compartment for men in front end. Side show banners on one side. (Ford). Purple.

5. No. 40 Semi with International tractor. Big top poles, canvas, seat and props. Purple.

6. No. 70 Ford straight truck. Side show equipment, six small cages loaded on it.

7. No. 80 Ford panel pickup. Misc. properties pulls house trailer. Could be used as a bill car. Purple.

8. Semi with International tractor. Hip-

Hippo pit show on the 1962 Hoxie-Bardex midway. Pfening Archives.



po den. Sleeper for 2 or 3 in front end. Purple.

9. Chevrolet straight truck. Water wagon, stake and chain with mounted stake driver, winch and boom. Also loaded ring curbs.

10. Ford pickup. Cookhouse properties, pulls cookhouse trailer with kitchens. Trailer was ex-Bartok concession trailer. Pickup was purple, trailer was white.

11. Panel truck. Grease joint and concessions.

12. Volkswagen station wagon. Sound truck, used for downtown bally and utility truck. Purple.

In addition there was another purple pickup that pulled a house trailer, a blue and white concession panel truck, and a blue and white panel concession and miscellaneous properties truck. The Johnson bear act and the Tim McCoy wild west unit traveled on privately owned vehicles. There were about a dozen privately owned house trailers, trucks and buses.

The show carried a cookhouse using a 20 x 20 white canvas top. Ticket prices for the big show were adults \$1.00, children 50 cents, with reserves an additional 25 cents for everyone.

Bradbury reported the following program:

1. Spec walkaround with all personnel six horses, one brahma bull and two elephants in beautiful red and silver spec blankets.

2. Trampoline act in center ring. Henry and Ida Mae Crowell.

3. Clowns, balloon gag.

4. Perch pole act with the two Linderns in ring one.

5. Trained black bears (3) presented by Hunkie Johnson in the center ring.

6. Clowns, firecracker gag.

7. Miss Ida Mae (Crowell) acrobatic act.

8. Clowns, bottle juggling act.

9. The Great Zamperls on the bounding rope in a comedy drunk routine in center ring.

10. Entrance of Col. Tim McCoy and announcement of his after show.

11. Acrobatic act featuring the Mendells from Berlin, two men and a boy. Act climaxed with a ladder climb with one of the Mendells doing a handstand on head of his partner who ascended and descended a platform ladder. Center ring.

12. Zamperla Family unicycle act featuring three youngsters, two girls. Presented in ring 2.

13. Clowns, bullfighter gag using several dogs disguised as bulls.

14. Liberty horses (6) worked in center ring by Hunkie Johnson. These were beautiful animals with attractive harness and tall colorful plumes.

15. Clowns, lost baby gag.

16. Trained elephants (2) presented by Hunkie Johnson.

The show had three clowns, Prof. Maxie, Frank Chester and Baghonghi, the noted dwarf clown long associated with the Cristianis.

The May 5 *Amusement Business* carried a report on the show: "Hoxie and Bardex Bros. Circus played Cochran, Georgia on April 21 and enjoyed excellent business."

"Ding Simpson, who was working schools ahead of the show, had a turnout of 1,400 children at the opening matinee in Adel. The show had capacity houses at both performances.

"Performance runs an hour and a half. Concert featured Col. Tim McCoy, who had proved to be a good draw in the region. Other concert acts included Dave Woods and a brahma bull; the Allen Family, Tex, Jeanette, Jimmy and Tex Allen, Jr., in a knife act.

"The big show had sixteen displays featuring the Zamperla brothers and sisters on unicycles; Napoleon Zamperla on the bounding rope; Three Namedills; Hunkie Johnson's bears; Two Linders, perch; Crowells, trampoline and Max's dogs. Clowns included Frank Cheshire, El Torador, Bogonga and Prof. Maxie.

"The show moved on fourteen semis with a fleet of private house trailers. Bob Styles was manager of the side show.

"J. Cap Ramsey was in charge of the billing crew and Joe Haworth was advance agent."

About two months into the season the owners found that McCoy was not drawing customers to the concert and he was let go. McCoy's name remained on the trucks after he left.

The season covered much of the territory that would be standard for the show in future years. The show went north through North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky. Hoxie-Bardex entered Ohio on June 15 at Portsmouth. Twenty-



Elephant semi owned by Franco Richards on Hoxie in 1963. Pfening Archives.

six stands were played in the Buckeye state before entering Pennsylvania at Albion on July 14. Cranbury Lake, New Jersey was shown on July 27 and on August 20 the show was in Edgewood, Maryland. It then turned south playing Virginia, North and South Carolina and three stands in Georgia.

The show closed at Lake City, Florida on October 27. The 1962 tour was a financial success, but, according to Elbirn, there was a clash of personalities and the Bardex-Tucker partnership was not a happy arrangement. Bartok took his equipment to Sarasota. Tucker took his share of the circus to Valdosta, Georgia and parked it in a junk yard.

Elbirn remembers that both owners contacted him about working in 1963. He choose to go with Tucker.

1963

During the winter of 1962-63 Tucker used the Valdosta quarters to re-frame his show for the 1963 season. He bought a 60 foot bale ring big top with one 40 and two 25s, a reptile pit show, an elephant semi and a stock semi from Franco Richards who had used the equipment on his Fargo Bros. Circus in 1962. The big top had been made by U.S. Tent Co. It was

The former King Bros. Wells-Cargo trailer on Hoxie Bros. in 1963. Pfening Archives.



brown, with red, white and blue side wall. Two elephants, Bonnie and Susie, were leased from Richards. A straight truck was outfitted as a cookhouse, a panel truck was used as a sound truck and a Wells-Cargo dual axle trailer were bought. The trailer had been built by Roger Boyd in 1961 for King Bros. It was

outfitted with cages on one side with the other used to carry the side show top, banner line and props. The show moved on twelve trucks, all painted purple and lettered in green with red trim.

The truck list was:

1. Semi. Reptile pit show. Was on Fargo Bros. in 1962. Cab painted in show's colors with the panel covers of the trailer a variety of colors.
2. Semi. Office, wardrobe, ticket, sleeper. Was on Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.
3. Semi. Stock truck, carries ponies, feed, props. On Fargo Bros. in 1962.
4. Semi. Elephants. Was on Fargo Bros. in 1962.
5. Semi. Canvas, poles, seats, props. On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.
6. Bus sleeper. New in 1963. Bunks for eighteen.
7. Panel truck. Cookhouse, new unit on show and well equipped. All cooking and serving take place on the vehicle.
8. Straight truck. Water, winch, stake driver. On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.
9. Straight truck. Light plant. On Hoxie-Bardex in 1962.
10. Panel sound truck used for utility and downtown bally. New on show.
11. Pickup truck, with small light plant. Truck pulls the cage trailer.
12. Wells-Cargo dual axel trailer. Cages on one side, side show top, banner line and props on other. Unit new in 1963.

The cookhouse was in a 15 x 15 foot brown tent. The side show-menagerie top was a 60 foot round with one 30 foot middle. This was probably the only time in circus history that the side show and big tops were the same width. This tent had been used as the big top on the 1961 Hoxie show. The

side show banner line was bought from a carnival and consisted of seven banners including the entrance. The elephants and animals were housed in the top. The attractions included knife thrower Tex Allen, and a few other acts including a women who did rag pictures. Allen served as side show manager.

The midway included a reptile show, a pony ride and several concession stands. Franco Richards operated the snake show and did a candy pitch during the big show.

The big show performance included a spec; trained dogs and ponies; Pamela de Torrys, trampoline; Evy Karoly, dressage act, liberty ponies, and bareback riding; swinging ladders; cloud swing; Lucy Richards, wire act; Marshalls, rolling globe balancing and juggling; Heintz and Margo, plate spinning; and elephants. Music for the big show was provided by Mac McClosky on the organ and Jack Helman on drums.

The March 23 *Amusement Business* said:

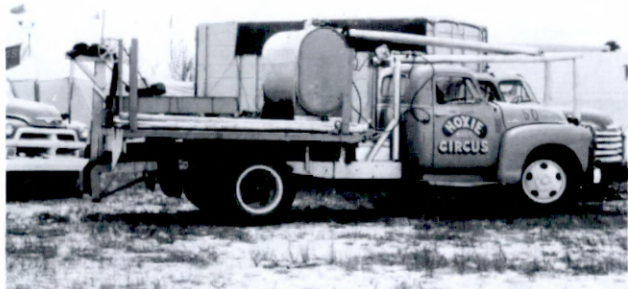


Ticket semi on Hoxie Bros. in 1964. Joe Bradbury photo.

"Hoxie Bros. Circus, out last year as Hoxie-Bardex Bros., will kick off the new season in its winter quarters town of Valdosta, Georgia on April 12. The show will under the sole ownership and management of L. B. Tucker.

"The circus has been completely re-framed, with new equipment including a 70 by 170 foot big top, a 60 by 90 side show top, a canvas banner line, pony ride top, concession and grease joint. Also new is a snake show, the Franco Richard's elephants and a pony drill broken by Matt Laurish. It will move on ten show-owned units plus performers' vehicles."

The November 16 *Amusement Business* reported the closing: "Hoxie Bros. Circus closed its 30 week season November 2 at Adel, Georgia, with owner L. B. Tucker returning to Miami winter quarters. He reported business spotty, but many dates grossed more than the prior year. He is going ahead with plans for next season.



Hoxie No. 50 water, winch and stake driver truck in 1964. Joe Bradbury photo.

"One major addition several weeks early in the season was the purchase of a new 75-kw Caterpillar diesel light plant. New wardrobe had already been completed and a six girl aerial display was planned. Also in the works were plans for switching all loads to semis, except the multi-purpose stake driving unit.

"The show returned home with the same ten units that opened the season and the program remained virtually the same except for two replacements. J. E. Hill, one of two agents, suffered a heart attack in September.

"Other staff included William Elbirn, manager; Kenneth Ikert, secretary; Mrs. Betty Tucker, treasurer; R. A. Hafford, biller; C. J. Matchett, concessions; Frank Peeler, side show manager and Benny White, boss canvasman."

1964

During its fourth season Hoxie Bros. Circus played a winter tour of Florida opening on January 10 in Marathon and closing on January 26 in Lauderdale Lakes.

The show traveled on eight trucks and again used the former Fargo Bros. 60 foot

The interior of the 1964 Hoxie big top. Joe Bradbury photo.



big top with one 40 and one 30 foot middle. Seating used seven high blues on the ends and back side. The front side used five high plank seats.

Swede Johnson's steel arena was erected in ring one and remained up during the performance. Music was provided by an electric organ played by Lyle Campbell.

The menagerie was housed in a three pole 20 x 15 foot tent. The top was placed on the midway where a side show usually stood. The banner line consisted of six canvas panels plus the entrance. During the early part of the season there were no standard side show attractions in the annex. The Wells-Cargo trailer with cages was placed in the tent. Tickets for the annex were 25 cents. Other stock displayed included Matt Laurish's eight ponies, eighteen show owned ponies, six liberty horses and one elephant. Bill Morris' elephant, Dinah, which had been on the show in 1961, was back.

The cookhouse was the only other tent used.

A new light plant bought at the end of the 1963 tour was placed in a new semi-trailer. This unit was No. 40. The back part of this unit carried 18 ponies. Another new semi carried the cookhouse and sleeping compartments. This unit was No. 80.

In 1964 the show traveled on:

1. No. 20 Semi. Poles, canvas, seats and props.
 2. No. 30 Semi. Office ticket wagon with wardrobe and sleeping compartment.
 3. No. 40 Semi. Light plant in front end and eighteen ponies in back.
 4. No. 50 Straight truck with auxiliary light plant. Pulled Wells-Cargo dual axle trailer with cages, side show top and banner line.
 5. No. 60 Straight truck. Carried old light plant. Pulled Wells-Cargo trailer with cages. Side show canvas, poles and banner line on top.
 6. No. 70 Pick up truck. Down town bally sound truck.
 7. No. 80 Semi. Cookhouse and sleeper.
 8. Semi. Carried one elephant and six liberty horses.
- Ken Ikert again covered the office and the elephant department. Benny White

was boss canvasman. Al Gates handled publicity and C. J. Matchetts was concession manager. Ray Herbers was advance agent. Jim Raab and Pete Pepke handled contracting in the Pennsylvania area. Red Hafford was bill poster.

When the show opened the regular season in Fort Mead, Florida on March 28 the performance included Don Floyd's wire act, Swede Johnson's five lions, Matt Laurish's dogs and ponies, Heidi Floyd's single trapeze, and a couple of clown numbers. There were twelve acts including an opening walk around and a grand finale. Don Floyd was announcer. The show lasted about fifty minutes.

The show moved north and after three weeks was in Sparta, Georgia on April 18 where Swede Johnson left the show. The next day in Winder, Georgia, Franco Richards joined with his two elephants and snake show.

The show traveled the route it had established in prior years playing Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky on the way north. On May 16 the show entered Ohio at Trenton for a string of thirty-nine towns. Forty seven stands in Pennsylvania followed. Only one New Jersey town was played. The route back home took the show through West Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia. The season closed on October 24 in Sylvester, Georgia.

1965

Hoxie Bros. opened its 1965 season on April 2 in Cairo, Georgia. The show was physically the same size as the prior year. Red Hafford repainted and lettered the rolling stock. The same big top was used for a third year. Big show tickets were \$1.00 for adults, 50 cents for children with 25 cents extra for reserve seats. A new red and green canvas canopy was used for the cookhouse. The circus looked larger and more impressive with the use of a larger side show-menagerie tent and a second midway show.

The annex was housed in a 60 foot round top with one 30. The menagerie exhibited two elephants, Bonnie and Susie, purchased from Franco Richards. A group of midget ponies and the Wells-Cargo trailer with cages were also displayed. The side show acts included Harvey Wray's fire act, Jane Randell's marionettes, and the Tex Allen Family, knife throwing act. Admission was 25 cents.

A new addition to the midway was Frank DeRizkie's snake show. The reptiles were shown in glass cases under a three pole 20 x 40 foot top which had been the menagerie-side show tent in 1964. Four canvas banners flashed this show.

The show moved on nine trucks,



Hoxie Bros. semi No. 20 carried the big top canvas, poles and seats in 1965. Joe Bradbury photo.

including an unlettered concession truck. Another truck was used on the advance by billposter Paul Carpenter.

Music for the big show was provided by records. Each act was introduced by ring master Tex Allen. Following a walk around each of the performers were introduced. The performance included Matt Laurish's six ponies and dog act; Jack Jackson troupe, trampoline; Harvey Wray, juggling and cloud swing; Bergette Herman, web; Jane Randell, menage horse; Marlease Herman, plate spinning; Maryons, risley act; Jackson troupe, horizontal bar act; two elephants and several clown stops. The clowns were Jack Jackson, Buck Leahey and Reggie Dvorak.

The April 24 *Amusement Business* reported on the opening: "Hoxie Bros. had its best opening week grosses in its history. The show has enjoyed warm, dry weather on its one day stands in South Georgia and Alabama.

"Last season was a disappointing one for the show," L. B. Tucker reported, 'but this season has started off as the very best.' The jump of 510 miles from the Miami winter quarters was made without incident, and the show was in fine shape for its Cairo debut.

"Matinees are generally light, but night crowds big, topped by a complete sellout at Daleville, Alabama on April 6. The matinee in Butler, Georgia on April 9 drew about 350 patrons in the 1,100 seat big top, but the night show was about 90% of capacity.

"Versatility is the secret of success on a small circus," Tucker commented, 'and nearly everyone has many jobs.' In addition to managing, Hoxie handles legal adjusting and press, and sells big show tickets from the office. His wife, Betty, sells reserve seat tickets, directs the

spec and has charge of wardrobe.

"Equestrian director Tex Allen is side show manager, makes openings on the front and works a knife-throwing act inside. His wife has charge of the music machine for the big show. Ken Ikirt, a 20-year-veteran office manager on many shows, has charge of the office and works elephants in the performance. Harvey

Wray, who does juggling and a cloud swing in the big show, also has the fire act in the side show. Jack Jackson, who heads the Jackson Troupe on ground bars and a trampoline act, also clowns. Other clowns are Reggie (Chuckles) Dvorak and Buck Leahey, who doubles as mail and AB agent. Jane Randall has a dog act and menage number.

"The Joseph Manyans Trio, father, mother and daughter, offers three acts, risley, plate spinning, and web. Matt and Mary Laurish have dog and pony acts. Laurish also works puppets in the side show, while Mary operates a pony ride on the midway. Frankie DeRizkie has a snake show on the midway and also is in charge of side show canvas.

"Advance included general agent, Eddie Hill, with three contracting agents, Pete Pepke, Jim Rabb and A. T. Rumsower, lining up a summer route in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Paul Campion is boss billposter. Other staffers and department heads include Joe Smiga, concessions; Benny White, big top canvas; Robert Brown, front door; Leo Lance and Roland Bolinger, cookhouse; Jack Campbell, electricity; Bill Lucas, elephants (2), and Matt Laurish, lot superintendent and ring stock.

"Admission prices this season are \$1 for

This seven compartment cage semi was new on Hoxie Bros. in 1966. Joe Bradbury photo.



adults and 50 cents for children. Reserved seats, not chairs but roped-off sections of blues, are 25 cents extra."

The truck line up was as follows:

1. No. 20 Semi with International tractor. Big top poles, canvas and sleeper.
2. No. 30 Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Office-ticket wagon with sleeping compartment.
3. No. 40 Chevrolet straight truck. Side show sleeper, props. Pulled Wells-Cargo trailer with cages on one side, side show canvas, poles and props on other side.
4. No. 50 Chevrolet straight truck. Water tank, winch and stake driver.
5. No. 60 Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Light plant and sleeper.
6. No. 80 Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Elephants, ponies and sleeping compartment.]
7. No. 86 Ford straight truck. Cookhouse.
8. No. 90 Chevrolet bus. Sleeper.

The show played its standard route going north. Hoxie played Mt. Olive, Kentucky on May 25. Dates were then played through Ohio and into its happy hunting grounds in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Three towns were played in Delaware. The route back south took the show through Kentucky into Tennessee before closing in Hawkinsville, Georgia on October 9.

The season was a good one. Tucker began making serious plans to enlarge the show.

1966

During the winter a seven compartment cage was built from the old pole, canvas and seat semi-trailer. This allowed an enlarged menagerie. A new tractor was purchased to pull this unit. The side show equipment was loaded on top of the cages which contained one lioness, one puma, one raccoon, one jaguar and four monkeys. The top and bottom side boards were lettered on the inside and flashed the unit while on exhibition.

The motorized line up for 1966 was:

1. No. 20 Semi with International tractor. Big top poles, canvas, seats and sleeping compartment.
2. No. 60 Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Elephants.
3. No. 80 Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Light plant and sleeper.
4. No. 90 Chevrolet bus. Sleeper.
5. No. - Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Office-ticket wagon with sleeping compartment.
6. No. - Semi with International tractor. Seven cage

compartments, loaded side show props on top.

7. No. - Ford straight truck. Cookhouse.

8. No. - Chevrolet pick up. Sound truck.

9. No. - Chevrolet straight truck. Water, winch and stake driver.

10. Chevrolet bus. Ponies and lead stock.

Other privately owned vehicles included the sloth bear pit show, Matt Laurish's stock semi, and six house trailers. On the road the new cage was placed inside the combination menagerie-side show.

Two elephants, two goats and four mid-get mules were also shown in the menagerie. The same 60 foot side show top with one 30 was again used. Milt Robbins, veteran side show manager, joined for the season. Robbins worked magic and Carlos Teal did fire eating, sword swallowing and electric acts in the annex. A canvas banner line was again used. The show owned ponies were used on a midway pony sweep.

There was also a walk through pit show featuring a sloth bear on the midway. Large panel banners folded out from the truck to front this attraction. The snake show, with four banners, was again on the midway. A large concession stand was placed opposite the side show entrance. This joint, under a green Coca Cola top, sold popcorn, lemonade, candied apples and snow cones. Two new red and white stripped novelties tents were spotted one each side of the marquee.

A new semi was bought for the elephants. The former bull semi that had come from Franco Richards was remodeled to carry the poles, canvas and seats. This unit had a sleeping compartment in the front end. Also new was a school bus that was rebuilt to carry ponies and midget mules. The final new vehicle was a pickup truck with sound equipment. This was attractively lettered and was used as a down town bally.

A new white big top with red and blue side wall was bought from U. S. Tent of Sarasota. It was a 60 foot bale ring round with one 40 and two 30s. During the first few weeks on the road one section of side wall was stolen and some of the old side wall was used to replace it. The seating was the same as in previous years with no grandstand chairs being used.

The show moved on ten trucks, plus one on the advance, but with



John Hall and Hoxie Tucker. Hall joined the show in 1966. Ron Bacon collection.

five semis instead of four as in the past. All of the new trucks were newly painted and attractively lettered. The purple color scheme continued with the show title in red on a white scroll. The older trucks were touched up. Some of the trucks carried the slogan "Greatest Circus on Earth for the Money."

During the season a new Wells-Cargo tandem semi trailer and tractor were added to the show's fleet.

John Hall joined the show to handle the office. Hall soon became Tucker's right hand man and was to have a big part in enlarging the show in future years. Ken Ikert moved to full time in charge of the elephants after Hall's arrival.

Tucker supplied his booking agents with letters of recommendation from satisfied sponsors to use in contracting. A typical letter is one written on August 5, 1966 by Dr. James McClelland, superintendent of the Polk State School and Hospital of Polk, Pennsylvania, which read in part: "It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to write once gain expressing appreciation for the very fine entertainment provided by Hoxie Bros. Circus for the residents of the Polk State School and Hospital on Monday July 4, 1966. This makes the third

Wells-Cargo cookhouse and sleeper on Hoxie Bros. in Villa Rica, Georgia on May 13, 1967. Joe Bradbury photo.

consecutive year that your circus has made the Fourth of July a really big day for the boys and girls and men and women living at this institution. Your people put on a most excellent and varied performance, and it can be said in all truth that the enthusiasm in your circus on the part of our patients was just as high this year as it was the first year you were here, and perhaps even more so. I think this is the hallmark of a really good show."

Hoxie opened on March 26 at Naples, Florida. The show played stands in Florida and Alabama and entered Georgia the first week of May. It played Clarkson, Georgia on May 6.

The big show lasted about an hour and a quarter. Music was furnished by Dave Epperly on an electric organ. Among the acts were Violetta Styles and Mildred Hall, webs; the Valcianos, Dalmatian dogs; Carlos Teal, Indian dancing and fire eating; Eddie Frisco's comedy car; Matt Laurish's dogs and liberty ponies; Miss Ulla (Valenciano), single trapeze; Mildred Hall, menage horse and the usual clown numbers by Bumpsey Anthony and Buddy LaForm.

The show moved north through Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio. It then heading into the regular dates in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey area.

Amusement Business carried a short piece in August 20 issue about the Hoxie show: "Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley gave Hoxie Bros. four locations July 23-29, including four days at Living Memorial Park, Coopersburg, for the Lions Club; Northampton (27) for the local Athletic Association; two closed performances (28) at Allentown State Hospital, and Crest Plaza Shopping Center (29) for the Cetronia Ambulance Corps., where one overflow and a near-capacity house made it a fine date. Acts included Ulla Valenciano, single trap; Frank Valenciano, juggling; Stephens Duo, acro; clowns Bumpsey Anthony and Buddy LaForm, and elephants worked by Kenny Ikert and Mildred Hall."

The 1966 tour was a very successful one, which allowed for more capital expenditures.

1967

During the winter Tucker bought two elephants, several vehicles and other equipment from the Beers-Barnes Circus. Roger Barnes and Charlie



Beers had retired from the circus business after touring their small circus for nearly 35 years.

The show remained in the ten truck class. With a stronger performance and a bigger flash on the lot it could now play the suburbs of larger cities. The seating was on six and seven high bleachers, accommodating around 1,500. The admission price was set at \$1.50 for adults and \$1.25 for kids. No reserve seats were sold, it was on a first-come, first served basis. The sale of reserves had been an irritation to sponsors and was thus dropped.

A blue 50 foot side show top with one 30 foot middle was acquired from the Hunt show. The canvas banner line was replaced with the cage and elephant semi. The trucks were painted on one side facing the midway as banners. The elephant semi carried the line "Congress of International Wonders and Wild Animal Zoo." An entrance banner was titled "Jungleland." The four elephants, Bonnie, Susie, Cora and Hazel (the last two from Beers-Barnes) were in the menagerie. Other lead stock included a dromedary and six ponies.

The Wells-Cargo semi, bought new in 1966, was remodeled as the cookhouse unit. The front end had sleeping compartments. A new office and wardrobe trailer was custom built for the show by the Alcan-American Trailer Company. The semi-trailer bought from Beers-Barnes was repainted and lettered. It carried two elephants, a dromedary and three ponies. A new tractor was bought for this unit. An additional semi was bought for the poles, big top canvas and seats and properties. All of the rolling stock was painted purple. The motorized equipment was painted and lettered by Red Hafford. The show moved out of quarters on eleven un-numbered trucks, plus one on the advance:

1. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Sleeper and cookhouse.
2. Semi with Chevrolet tractor purchased from Beers-Barnes. Carried two elephants, one camel and three ponies.
3. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Light plant.
4. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Cages with entire side show loaded on top.
5. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Side show banners painted on one side. Carried two elephants and three ponies.
6. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Big top poles, canvas, seats and props.
7. Chevrolet bus. Carried props, floats



The former Beers-Barnes elephant semi on Hoxie Bros. in 1967. Joe Bradbury photo.

and hay. Pulled office-ticket trailer.

8. Chevrolet pick up. Sound truck and air calliope.

9. Chevrolet straight truck. Water, winch and stake driver.

A winter tour was again played in South Florida which opened with a two day stand in Marathon on January 14-15. The route took the show as far north as New Port Richy on February 7 before closing in Westchester on February 19. The performance included Dime and Connie Wilson; Karolys, trampoline, juggling and casting; Ironberg's, unicycle, high school horse, dogs and pony; Jesus Segrea, rola bola, head balancing trapeze; and the Pinsons, aerial cradle. Business was very good.

The regular season opened on March 31 at Sweetwater, Florida. The show moved slowly through Florida and then went into Alabama. The company entered Georgia at Villa Rica on May 13 and South Carolina at Columbia on May 16. It played Kings Mountain, North Carolina

The Hoxie Bros midway in 1968. The marquee had been on Robbins Bros. in 1966. Fred Pfening photo.



on May 20 and by May 27 the show was in Mountain City, Tennessee.

The 1967 performance was the strongest ever. Dime Wilson was performance director and announced the show. The opening spec included all performing personnel, lead stock and elephants. Four small carts, depicting cages, a calliope and a bandwagon were pulled by goats and ponies. The units were built by Dime Wilson during the winter.

The performance included the Karolys' trampoline, rola-bola, plate spinning and juggling acts; Llana Ironberg's manage horse; Ironberg sisters, dogs and a pony, rope spinning and unicycle act; trained dromedary presented by Richey Richiardi; the Coreys, aerial bars; Richey Richiardi, wire act; web number; and clown stops. Ken Ikert and Frank Peeler each worked two elephants in rings one and three. Dime and Connie Wilson, Floyd Moser and Georgie Lake were the clowns.

New York Times reporter Martin Arnold visited the show in Dennison, Ohio in July. A long article appeared in that paper on July 17 which quoted John Hall: "To break even Hoxie Bros. needs to bring in \$1,000 each performance. It's vital that we get a good hustling sponsor. That's why we give them such a good percentage. In Dennison, on a rainy Sunday the show took in from \$800 to \$900 on the concessions in one performance. On a good day we can make between \$1,500 and \$2,000 up front. That's where our profit is." Hall continued, "The average performer in Hoxie Bros. Circus is paid \$125 a week. For this sum a performer must take part in several acts, often performing seven days a week in 13 shows. He generally helps out around the circus as well."

During the first part of the season music for the big show was provided by Helen Wilson on an electric organ. After Von Bros. Circus closed in Pennsylvania King



The cage semi served as half of the Hoxie side show banner line in 1968. Fred Pfening photo.

Charles Weathersby brought his Von Bros. band to the show.

The 1967 season was another successful one for Tucker. With money in the till he was ready to enlarge his show further.

1968

Hoxie Bros. Circus opened the winter tour on January 27 in Marathon, Florida using the same equipment as in 1967. This unit stayed out until February 25 when it closed in Westchester, Florida.

The winter tour performance was very strong with the Canestrelli family, chimps and unsupported ladders; and the Alberto Zoppe troupe with a horse and dogs. Dime Wilson had four clowns. For the first time Hoxie Bros. used a five piece band.

The show was presented in an 80 foot round top with a 40 and two 30s. The tent was bought from Mrs. Henry Vonderheid and had been used on Von Bros. in 1967. The big top was white trimmed in red and blue. It was originally constructed as a bale ring tent, but was converted to a push pole. A trailer used to carry the canvas doubled as a bandstand. An orange and blue marquee was bought from Jack Smith who had used it on his Robbins Bros. in 1965 and 1966. It was repainted to read "Hoxie Bros. World Toured Circus."

When the regular season opened on March 28 in Clewiston, Florida the show moved on fifteen trucks. More bleachers were bought from the Von show allowing additional seating in the larger tent. The 1967 big top became the side show tent, using one 30 foot middle. Hinged letters reading "side show" were mounted on the roofs of the banner line semis. Blue and gold striped canvas bally cloths were hung from the trailer bodies to the ground. This added flash to the front of the annex.

The annex housed three elephants, one less than the previous year. Cora died in quarters on March 13. Side show acts included Richey Richardi, sword swallowing; and Joyce and Pietro Canestrelli, knife throwing, fire eating and sword box. A snake show in a 12 x 20 foot tent was also on the midway. The reptile show traveled in a semi purchased from Beers-Barnes which was not used in 1967.

A new Wells-Cargo trailer carried all the midway concessions. The show looked much bigger on the lot due to the additional trucks.

The advance and publicity departments were improved over former years. Forrest Freeland designed a new four page herald which was printed in black and white and included twenty-one photos and many other drawn illustrations.

The staff included: John Hall, press agent and business manager; Frank Haynes, advance agent; A. M. "Red" Hafford, billposter; Jim Hodges, 24 hour man; Joe Smiga, concession manager; Frank Peeler, side show manager and big top

Interior of Hoxie big top in 1969. The Canestrelli chimp act is performing in center ring. Gordon Carver photo.



The Hoxie Bros. pole and seat semi in 1968. Fred Pfening photo.

canvas superintendent; James Hendrickson, pit show manager and electrician; Larry French, property boss; Betty Tucker, superintendent of front door; Ken Ikert, lot superintendent and elephant boss; Milford King, cookhouse steward; James Miller, mechanic; Dime Wilson, Jr., pit show manager; June Badger, menagerie superintendent; Dime Wilson, performance director and King Charles Weathersby, band director and 24 hour man.

The 1968 performance included: Dime Wilson's balloon act; Los Martinz, casting act, wire act and trampoline; Canestrellis, chimps, aerial perch; Mildred Hall, liberty ponies, unsupported ladders, rola bola; balancing trapeze; Carmen del Molino and Oresto Canestrelli and elephants.

Music was provided by Weathersby's band of seven pieces, including an electric organ. This group of black musicians was a throw back to the side show bands of previous years.

Following the opening the show moved north entering Georgia at St. Marys on



The Hoxie Bros. horse semi in 1968. Fred Pfening photo.



The new Hoxie Bros. canvas spool truck being pulled off a soft lot in 1969. Pfening Archives.

April 4 for fourteen stands. It went into Alabama at Enterprise on April 22 and was back in Georgia by April 29.

When Joe Bradbury visited the show in Swainsboro, Georgia on April 15 he made this list of the Hoxie rolling stock:

1. Semi. Poles and seats.
2. Semi. Side show props and cage truck. One side decorated for use as side-show banner line.
3. Semi. Elephants (loads 2), one side decorated as side show banner line.
4. Semi. Elephants (loads 1), also carried one camel and three ponies.
5. Semi. Horses; 1 horse, 17 ponies, 1 goat. This unit was used on show for first time this season. Purchased from Beers-Barnes. Semi is painted silver with title in blue on purple shield.
6. Semi. Pit Show, this unit used first time this season. Purchased from Beers-Barnes. One side decorated for use as pit show bannerline.
7. Semi. Cookhouse.
8. Prop truck. New on show this season. Has purple cab and silver body. Pulls the office trailer.
9. Stake driver, winch, water truck. Pulled canvas trailer.
10. Sound and bally pickup truck. Decorated in purple strips and red and yellow circles. Pulls Hoxie Tucker's house trailer.
11. Band sleeper truck. New on show this season. Pulled Frank Peeler's trailer.
12. Joe Smiga's concession truck. Pulls concession trailer.
13. Office and ticket trailer.
14. Canvas trailer. Doubled as bandstand.
15. Concession trailer.
16. Light plant, new this season.

In addition to these vehicles there were approximately fourteen privately owned trucks and house trailers on the show.

While the show was in Penn-

sylvania a teenager named Allan C. Hill joined the show in the concession department. This was his first step down the road that led to ownership of the show.

An interesting up-date on the show appeared in the August 31 *Amusement Business*: "A three-day stand in Freeport, Grand Bahamas, October 18-20, will close the 1968 Hoxie Bros. Circus tour, owner L. B. (Hoxie) Tucker confirmed last week. Playing for the Freeport Hebrew Congregation at Rotary Field, the show will ship out from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, October 17. If business warrants, the island stay may be extended.

This Hoxie ad, drawn by Forrest Free-land, appeared in the 1969 newspaper courier. Pfening Archives.

HOXIE BROS.

GIGANTIC 3-RING Circus

Transcending Beauty and Magnitude
Efulgent Spectacle and Pageantry

HIGH AERIAL BALLET

Bevies of Beautiful Girls on High

HIGH FLYING TRAPEZE STARS

Presenting Los Martinz 1st Time in U.S.

3 RINGS of TIGHT WIRE MARVELS

HOXIE PERFORMING T.V. ELEPHANTS
"BIRDLAND"

Amazing Animal Stars

Camels * Ponies * Chimps

Crazy Clowns Galore

Gorgeous Girls on Parade

Flashing Acrobats

Twice Daily-Rain or Shine

"Visited in Edison, New Jersey, the circus was doing plenty of business in what is shaping up as its best season. Weather has co-operated, with rain cutting only three performances since an early spring bow.

"Recent dates in Ohio and New Jersey have been solid with Parkway Manor and Yellow Springs, Ohio, and Villas, New Jersey, particularly good. At Edison, under Fire Department auspices for the first time, a near-capacity matinee and SRO night show brought a third performance.

"Dime Wilson has shed his greasepaint to handle the announcer-performance director chores on a full-time basis. With good backing from King Charles' six-piece band, he keeps the 100 minute show moving at a fast pace.

"Costumes are a high point, with Betty Tucker outdoing herself, with Connie Wilson's assistance. Opening 'Birdland' spec is a delight, with feathers galore. Lighting is also good, above par for a tent show. It really does a job under the 80 foot top with a 40 and two 30-foot middles.

"The Canestrellis are much in evidence on the show, with Oreste and Joyce handling unsupported ladders and aerial perch, while Oreste also teams in a balancing trap routine with Carmen Del Molino. Pietro Canestrelli works two chimps and a poodle, and juggles firebrands on the rola-bola. All join in the Jumping Jacks trampoline routine with Miss Chona.

"Los Martinz are new additions, with a fine casting act. Clown Georgie Lake teams with Floyd Moser in several gags, handles a Twiggy routine alone, and in white-face does a cloud swing turn with Richey Ricardi. Latter is also busy, working Prince George the camel, and taking a turn on the tight wire in a display with Miss Chona and Miss Carmen. Chona is center ring, with a hoop leap finale.



The small Hoxie Bros. ticket trailer in 1969. Al Conover photo.



The lion act cages being unloaded from flatbed truck on Hoxie Bros. in 1969. Pfening Archives.

"Aerial ballet has lighted ladders over the end rings with trap routines, while Carmen Del Molina is featured over the center ring on the web. Larry French works one Hoxie elephant, with Capt. Ken Ikert putting the other two through their paces, including a bougalou. 'Indian Fantasy' finale winds up with a patriotic note, as the flag unfurls to the strains of God Bless America--about as typical circus as you can get anywhere.

"Side show has Frank Peeler, talker; Bill Bradley, boss canvasman; Richey Ricardi, sword swallower; Oreste Canestrelli, fire eater and knife throwing, with Joyce, who also does the blade box. Menagerie has four lamas, two lions, tiger, puma, jaguar, two apes and the three elephants.

"For the fourth year Hoxie Bros. is using no reserves, getting \$1 advance, \$1.50 and \$1.25 for kids at the wagon. Side show is 50 cents and 25 cents, with the pit show and ponies a quarter."

The regular season closed on October 15 in Davie, Florida. The three day stand in Freeport, Grand Bahamas Islands from October 18 to 20 was very successful with the date extended an extra day. It was reported to have been the first circus to play the island. Forty-one performers and staff flew to the island. Featured were the Seguras, Boginos, Carmen Del Molina, Dime Wilson family, Richey Richardi, Chomna Eastwood, Oresto Canestrelli, Floyd Moser, Georgie Lake, Ken Ikert, and the King Charles band. Eight trucks with equipment and animals went by ship.

1969

Following a very successful 1968 season Tucker invested a sizeable amount of money in preparing the show for the 1969 tour. A new orange and yellow stripped push pole tent was bought from U. S. Tent and Awn-

ing Company. It was an 80 with two 30s and a 40, with a green side wall. A new gray marquee with green side wall came with the big top. New ten high seating was built in quarters. A canvas spool truck, formerly on Hagen Bros., was purchased and cannibalized for parts. The mechanism was mounted on a new 1969 Chevrolet truck. A 60 foot push pole round top with one 30 foot middle was bought from Pete Cristiani. This was used for the side show.

An additional elephant, Myrtle, was bought from Pete Cristiani. Myrtle was one of the Adele Nelson bulls. The former canvas and bandstand truck was converted into a cage, using the cage compartments from prior years. The show purchased the Swede Johnson wild an-

Manuel "Junior" Ruffin in his Prince Bogino costume in 1969. Cliff Glotzbach photo.



imal act consisting of five female lions which was carried in three small cages.

A semi with a Chevrolet tractor was bought from Johnny's United Shows carnival to carry four elephants. Another new semi-trailer was bought from Johnny Canole and made into a spool truck. Another trailer housed a new Caterpillar 70 kw generator, another 70 kw Caterpillar and a 20 kw GMC generator. A new Chevrolet straight truck also was bought from Canole. The former cookhouse semi was converted into a sleeper. A lowboy trailer was bought to carry the small cages for the wild animal act. The former light plant straight truck was converted to a cookhouse utility and sleeper truck which pulled a new Wells-Cargo trailer housing the cookhouse. A Jeep was bought and equipped with a stake driver. A straight water truck was equipped with a stake driver, and boom. The Jeep was pulled over the road and not driven between stands. All tractors on the show were late models. The purple color scheme was continued.

The rolling stock included:

1. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Carried four elephants, side show banners painted on one side.
2. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Carried four llamas, eleven ponies and one horse, side show banners painted on one side.
3. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Light plants and electrical equipment.
4. Semi with International tractor. Carried big top poles and seats.
5. Semi with Chevrolet tractor. Sleeper.
6. Flatbed semi with Chevrolet tractor. Carried steel arena, three wild animal cages.
7. Chevrolet straight truck. Cookhouse sleeper. Pulled Wells-Cargo cookhouse trailer.
8. Chevrolet pickup, sound truck.



Side show opening in 1969. One elephant semi was used as half of the banner line. Al Conover photo.

Pulled band stand trailer.

9. Chevrolet straight truck. Carried props and pulled office-ticket trailer.

10. Chevrolet straight truck. Stake driver and water wagon. Pulled cage trailer.

11. Chevrolet straight truck with big top canvas spool.

12. Chevrolet straight truck used by mechanic.

13. Straight truck, concessions. Pulled Wells-Cargo concession trailer.

14. Jeep stake driver, pulled from town to town behind a car.

Art "Doc" Miller joined the show to manage the advance advertising car. Archie Duncan and Dorothy Ashmure were the billers. In prior years the show had used stock paper and window cards from Enquirer. In 1969 additional styles of paper were bought from the Globe and Central printing firms. For the first time the show posted multi-sheet posters. Frank Haynes joined as contracting agent. Local bookers included Jim Raab, Pete Pepke, George Hubler, Ron Bacon, Allen Duffield and Alan Meredith.

John Hall used a proven formula in working with sponsors. Typical is a letter sent out one week ahead of the show date. It read in part: "Circus day is less than one week.

"Your most important week lies ahead. You and your fellow members will sell more tickets in the coming week than in any previous week. Now is the time for all of you to put your shoulders to the task of selling everyone in your area a ticket to the 1969 Hoxie Bros. Circus. Every ticket sold means money for you. Don't let any of those dollars get away.

"Also, it is very important for you to have all your members return their money and/or unsold tickets to you early enough on circus day morning

for you to come to the circus office by 10:30 A.M., the time of settlement mentioned on your contract. Please be sure that the lot is mowed if necessary, and that arrangements have been made for the circus to use a nearby fire hydrant for water. Also, check with local officials to see if we may use our sound truck on circus day."

The 1969 season opened on March 15 at Outler Ridge, Florida. The usual route was played in Florida and Alabama and by April 15 the show was in Jackson, Georgia. It then moved north through the Carolinas and Tennessee and was in Parkersburg, West Virginia on May 26. The show entered Ohio at Belpre on May 28

Tabloid newspaper courier used by Hoxie Bros. in 1969. Pfening Archives.

HOXIE BROS. GIGANTIC 3-RING CIRCUS

CIRCUS WORLD

ADDITIONAL SEATING, HUGE NEW BIG TOP, AFRICAN LION ACT AMONG NEW FEATURES



COMING SOON

CONSULT YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER FOR DATE AND LOCATION

POSITIVELY THE BIGGEST AND BEST PERFORMANCE EVER OFFERED THE PUBLIC AT AN ALL-TIME LOW ADMISSION Don't Miss This Show!! A Gorgeous Panorama Of Dazzling Beauty All The Thrills, The Color, The Action, Music And Gaiety That Make A Good Circus The Favorite Entertainment Of Every Child And Of Every Normal Adult Who Is Still Young In Heart NO WHERE ELSE Can So Much Be Seen At So Little Cost, and Never Has There Been So Much To See!

ADVANCE TICKETS

\$1.00

FROM LOCAL SPONSOR AND LOCAL STORES. CIRCUS DAY PRICES: ADULTS \$1.50 - CHILDREN \$1.25 NO RESERVED SEATS

The Hoxie light plant semi in 1969. Pfening Archives.

for about two dozen dates booked by Ron Bacon and George Hubler. A program was printed in some towns.

Due to the increased size and strength of the performance the show was able to play larger towns than in prior seasons. Admission in advance was \$1.00 for adults, and \$1.50 on the lot.

The 1969 performance was the strongest ever fielded by Tucker. The Swede Johnson lions were worked by Manuel "Junior" Ruffin. As Prince Bogino, Ruffin was perhaps the first black wild animal trainer to appear in an American circus.

The steel arena was set up near ring three and remained up during the show. Dime Wilson was again performance director. The spec in 1969, called "A Journey to the Moon," was a salute to the United States space program. All the female performers were dressed to represent stars and planets.

The performance early in the season included: Ruffin working five female lions; Joyce Fox and Joanne Pinson, loop the loop; the Jacksons, comedy acrobatics, horizontal bars; Consuelo Eastwood, wire act; Los Tizocs, aerial cradle act, balancing trapeze; Harry Rooks, liberty ponies; Tabak troupe, tetterboard; Huston and Company, magic; Pipo, European musicale clown; Richey Richardi, cloud swing; elephants in three rings worked by Ken Ikert, Junior Ruffin, Mildred Banta and Frank Peel-er; and clown numbers.

Hoxie Bros. played its usual route through Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The show closed in Petersburg, Virginia on September 18.

Hoxie Tucker had come along way in establishing himself as a major circus owner. His circus was to grow larger as it entered the next decade. John Hall contributed extensively to the growth of the show and would become even more important in the years to come.

Author's Note

In the late 1870s, one of the largest American circuses of its day, Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Great International Allied Shows twice toured Australia. The visits were of such moment that they were extensively documented in the Australian newspapers and journals. In addition, three very thorough contemporary accounts are extant describing the tours in admirable detail. Although it would be superfluous for me to duplicate these records with a day-by-day, town-by-town account of the visits of Cooper, Bailey & Co. to Australia, an analytical retrospective is probably long overdue.

In this essay, therefore, I would like to convey to American circus historians a modern-day Australian viewpoint of the visits to this country (or, as they then were, colonies) of this immense circus, the ancestor of today's Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. In putting this treatise together, I have relied upon a variety of freshly uncovered sources, many of which are not readily available to my American counterparts, as well as my own countless hours in salvaging Australia's circus past for posterity. In doing so, I trust that it may serve to broaden scholarly horizons on both sides of the Pacific. The material examined has provided as many valuable insights into the nature of two frontier societies as it has about their respective nineteenth century entertainment industries.

The first part of this two-part article draws mostly on contemporary accounts not previously consulted by researchers to give a summary of the preparations James A. Bailey made for each of the two Australian tours and how they were executed. The second part of the article, to appear in the next edition of *Bandwagon*, will look at some aspects of the social impact that this huge exportation of American popular culture had on Australia and the Australian circus.

A map or atlas of the Australian, New Zealand and adjacent areas might prove handy to those readers who would like to follow the tours of Cooper, Bailey & Co. in detail.

Introduction

In the 1870's many American circuses came to be organized on an ever grander scale that typified the vastness of the young nation. Circus proprietors impressed their companies on the public not by vaunting their varied talents or the beauty and sagacity of their horses, but by publicizing the thousands of square feet the circus covered, the thousands of dollars to which their weekly expenses

COOPER, BAILEY & CO. GREAT INTERNATIONAL ALLIED SHOWS The Australian Tours 1876-78

Part One
BY MARK ST. LEON

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amounted and the number of miles which their parades extended. Americans held a boundless admiration for everything big and the colossal circus establishments which crossed the North American continent did justice to the popular sentiment.

One such example was the circus of Cooper, Bailey & Co. In 1873 James A. Bailey, an enterprising advance agent, became the partner of James Cooper, his former employer. Together they built the Cooper, Bailey & Co. Circus into one of substantial proportions.

The year 1876 was the centenary of the United States and P. T. Barnum responded by taking out a show that he claimed would give Americans "a Fourth of July celebration every day." Bailey on the other hand worried that the circus business might suffer because so many Americans would save their money to go to Philadelphia for the Centennial Exposition. So, he put his show on rails and struck for California.

James A. Bailey.
Pfening Archives.

Although circuses and circus performers had travelled between North America and Europe since the late 18th century, thus accelerating developments in the circus arts and circus management on both sides of the Atlantic, the colonial Australian circus industry was long deprived of a similar access and exposure to new talent and ideas. The Australian circus industry, dat-

ing from 1847, remained solidly British in character, undergoing only the slight modifications necessary in order to transplant the entertainment form to one of Her Majesty's newest and most distant frontier dominions. Although the American circus man Joseph Andrew Rowe visited the colonies twice during the gold rushes of the 1850s with his North American Circus and played to popular appeal, his visits were not enough to shake the foundation of the local

circus industry. In any case, an examination of Rowe's programs reveals a repertoire steeped in the tradition of Astley and Ducrow, the same sources from which the Australian circus men had drawn their initial experience and inspiration.¹ The real impact of American circus on the Australian scene came later, and is but a chapter in the larger volume that could be written of the transfer of American cultural values onto Australian soil.

For a quarter of a century, from 1873 to 1900, Australia was visited by a steady stream of the largest of American circuses. The end of the Civil War, the unification of the eastern and western states of the United

States by rail in 1869, and the development during the 1870s of regular and reliable shipping service across the Pacific enabled many companies based in the east to not only tour the Pacific territories but to chance their luck with a visit to the fabled land that lay in the South Seas, the little continent called Australia. They must have reaped rich harvests because

they returned again and again. In this period at least ten Yankee circuses made no less than fifteen visits to Australia. They revealed some of the wonders of their mighty nation upon colonies still tied to the apron strings of an even more distant and inaccessible mother England. Several more American circuses seriously contemplated the trip but for varying rea-



JANESVILLE, TUESDAY, JULY 18

The Big Show Coming!
The Day **POSITIVELY** Settled
COOPER, BAILEY & CO'S
Great International 10 Allied Shows!



\$50,000 CHALLENGE!

THE ONLY 5 TRAINED ELEPHANTS IN AMERICA.
THE ONLY 4 LIVING SEA LIONS IN AMERICA.
THE ONLY BABY ORE LIONS.
The Only Living Giraffe in America from 17 to 23 feet high.



50 CAGES OF RARE WILD ANIMALS!

Stupendous Inter-Continental Amphitheatre.
Twelve in the Most Spectacular, Thrilling, Novel and Most Entertaining of the Age!
COLLOQUIAL EXHIBITION OF ALL NATIONS!

MONSTER DUAL CIRCUS COMBINATION!
A Combination of Circus Companies.
The Royal Family of Circus Menagerie.

JAMES ROBINSON.
The Most Famous, Famous, Famous and Celebrated CIRCUS RINGMASTER IN THE WORLD, engaged in the Circus, from 1840 to 1860, and since then.
Four Acres of Exhibition, Tents.
Only a Single Admission Ticket is Required for All. All Shows Totally Enlarged.



Will Positively Exhibit
At Janesville, Tuesday July 18.
MILWAUKEE, July 14. PORTAGE, July 11. SARASOTA, July 10.
WISCONSIN, July 12. MONROE, July 17.



The Cooper & Bailey show lining up for a parade in the United States in 1876. Pfening Archives.

of Yankee culture. The menageries, the boastful advertising, grand parades, circus trains and other trademarks of the American circus were adopted by a succession of the largest Australian circuses which gradually divested themselves of their staid British colonial heritage.

FIRST AUSTRALIAN TOUR

In 1876, James A. Bailey determined to take the entire Cooper, Bailey & Co. show with all the physical equipment including its large menagerie to Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. Bailey paid US \$17,000 to charter the *City of Sydney*, a mail steamer, to convey his company across the Pacific to Sydney, the first leg of the show's two year long Antipodean tour. A distance of 76,000 miles would be covered before Cooper, Bailey & Co. landed back in New York City.

Until this time, the few foreign circuses that had ventured as far as Australia were comparatively modest in equipment, one ring concerns with limited ring stock, and baggage that was confined to costumes and small tentage. Bailey's grand plans were at once doomed to failure by the American circus world, but he faltered not.

The start to the 1876 season was made on 17 April 1876, with an engagement of one week in St. Louis, Missouri, a joint exhibition with Howes' Great London Circus. The coming Australian tour was made a great advertising feature at every appearance and contributed to the big business generated.³

As W. G. Crowley wrote in the 1876 route book: "The route once taken was not given up. If other agents crossed it, they were papered without end. Agent after agent was sent to the front and gang after

gang of bill posters assailed the enemy until they were beaten and buried beneath the paper of the Great International. There were eight different shows on its route at the same time through Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, but they were all worsted in the battle for patronage and money. Old John Robinson was badly beaten at Burlington Ia., and Canton Ill.; the Lent show had to sell some of its property to get out of Mankato, Minn.; the Sells Brothers jumped like kangaroos out of Ottawa Ill.; Burr Robbins and Dan Castello flew like chaff before the wind in Wisconsin and Minnesota and Illinois, and growing tired of the fight, fled into Michigan. The fight for Minnesota and Wisconsin was a grand one, but the advance management placed the show before the people in such a way as to draw crowded houses and secure barrels of money while the shows ahead and behind were buffeted about on the waves of a stormy sea and half of them closed their season prematurely while many of them lost money. The master stroke of the season however was the transcontinental trip. It was skilfully planned and carefully carried out and resulted in full houses and large receipts. Large jumps were made from Wisconsin to the Pacific slopes, and before less energetic managers could comprehend the question, the International was over the Rocky and Sierra Nevada mountains and among the people who had gold and silver. Montgomery Queen gave up Nevada and fled to Oregon in despair leaving the field unoccupied."⁴

The Cooper, Bailey & Co. Circus played in San Francisco 6-17 September at the corner of Seventh and Mission Streets, and gave a return engagement on 23-27 October, playing to as many as 6,000 people a day. Crowley later wrote in the 1877 route book that during the San Francisco

Cooper & Bailey newspaper ad used in Janesville, Wisconsin in 1876. Circus World Museum collection.

sons declined to make the long and expensive voyage across the Pacific.²

In striking contrast to this activity, although many English performers and several small circus troupes ventured a visit to the Australian colonies, only one complete English circus, Bostock and Wombell's in 1906, visited Australia. The Harmston circus, although English in origin, had used America and South East Asia respectively as staging points for its visits to Australia in 1890 and 1897-1898. All of these circuses, American or otherwise, were a continuous source of fresh talent and ideas for the local circus scene and therefore an impetus to the development and diversification of the local product.

The size and splendor of the American circuses easily eclipsed their smaller, less flamboyant Australian contemporaries. They gave the colonial audiences a taste

run, the show people met "many men who have visited Australia, and who never tired of recounting its wealth and liberality. . . . Their stories were listened to and carefully noted and yet none knew with what results, until late the following month, when it became known that the show was to be equipped for a voyage across the Pacific. It was an undertaking that few would care to invest time and capital in; for notwithstanding the number of rumors afloat, its success or failure could only be determined by trial. Of the expeditions that had already gone, little definite information could be obtained. Some said this, others said that, and the result of all their sayings still left the matter in doubt. W. W. Cole had only half resolved to take his establishment to what he was pleased to call the Promised Land and Montgomery Queen was even then making preparations, or what resembled them closely, to start with his circus and menagerie."⁵

The cost of transporting the company across the Pacific would not be light. Provincial roads in Australia were rudimentary for the most part. Although rail networks were constantly expanding under the various colonial administrations, their value was not enhanced by gauges that varied in width from one colony to the next. The lack of unity of the Australian railway gauges, a sad reflection on the colonial administrations and a blight on the nation's freight distribution capacity to this day, would necessitate Cooper, Bailey & Co. organizing its first Australian tour on the basis of a separate visit to each of five of the Australian colonies (New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania) as separate exercises, using rail within each colony but shipping by steamer between the principal sea ports of each. It was also recognized that the colonies would be incapable of sustaining audiences of the size that the show had been accustomed to in the United States. The estimated population of the six Australian colonies together in 1876 was barely two million, most of which was concentrated in the south east portion. Cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and a few others were the only places that might be expected to yield audiences comparable in size to the more numerous population centers of the United States.

With these factors in mind, the Cooper, Bailey & Co. management decided to lighten their company substantially before shipping for Australia. The property advertised for sale in the *San Francisco Bulletin* included "65 head of eastern horses including well-matched driving teams, saddle horses and brood mares, ten head of matched grey Kentucky mules, six Shetland ponies, four dromedaries, one

white camel, rare birds and many other animals, large wagons and tableau cars, canvas seats and a large amount of other circus property including property banners, wardrobe harness and animal cages and a large elephant called Betsy." Because the show was set to sail for Australia on 8 November, the advertisement announced, these properties "would positively be sold to the highest bidder."⁶

The equipment ultimately shipped included only 20 horses and ponies, a trimmed down menagerie, and about 60 men and women, including Mr. and Mrs. James A. Bailey, agents, performers, grooms, keepers, tent men and the like. In addition, there was George Middleton's side show that included exhibitions of the armless lady, Ann E. Leak; some Albino people; and Pearl Foster. The elephants and camels were each placed on wooden affairs like horse boxes, and remained in these for the duration of the voyage to Australia. The other beasts in the menagerie were kept in what were called "dens," presumably iron bar cages, which could be lifted off their carriages and stored in the hold. The carriages could then be dismantled and shipped in pieces. The frames, wheels, axles and poles were all duly numbered and conveniently stowed.⁷

In the charming little route book commemorating the first Australian tour in 1877, press agent, W. G. Crowley gives much credit to J. B. Gaylord, the show's General Advance Manager, for the suc-



Parade wagon illustration used in a Cooper & Bailey newspaper ad in Rockford, Illinois on June 13, 1876. Pfening Archives.

cess of the Australian visit. Be this as it may, my attention in reading the names of the show's personnel was drawn to the names of Signor G. Agrati, listed as the Assistant Manager to James A. Bailey, and H. P. Lyons, the show's advertising manager.⁸

It is my opinion that Agrati, who had managed the first Australian tour in 1873

of Chiarini's Royal Italian Circus, and the Australian showman, H. P. "Harry" Lyons (1845-1913) were largely responsible for bringing off the first Australian tour of Cooper, Bailey & Co., and possibly the second tour as well. Agrati maintained an intimate link with Australia long after the first Chiarini visit, and appears to have settled here. Lyons' extraordinary career as an agent and manager, during which he was associated with at one time or another just about every Australian travelling show of note, would make a fascinating biography on its own. It was Lyons who brought the famous French rope walker, Blondin, whom he had met in California in 1874, to Australia on two highly successful tours in 1874 and 1875.

There would have been little likelihood of an American circus assuming the risk and additional expense of venturing into unknown territory without either some initial reconnaissance being undertaken or first hand professional advice being available. It is my guess that Agrati and Lyons returned to the United States with the object of bringing a large American circus to Australia's shores, complete with menagerie, and put the idea to James A. Bailey. Lyons knew the audience and the logistics involved. Having successfully steered Chiarini's wagon show through the Australian backblocks, Agrati would have had a good idea as well.

The Voyage

The departure for Australia on the Pacific Mail Steamship Co.'s steamer, the *City of Sydney* on 8 November, 1876 was delayed for over an hour as the mails were late in being delivered to the ship. A foam-covered team dashed down to the dock and the mail was hurried aboard. Someone shouted "All right" and in came the gang plank. At 11 a. m., the company bade farewell to San Francisco. The voyage across the Pacific lasted twenty-eight days, and was pleasant throughout. Only one vessel was

sighted between San Francisco and Honolulu, the *City of New York*. In Honolulu, the animals were exhibited aboard the boat to the local people at 50 cents admission. Corby's Original Georgia Minstrels, fellow passengers on the ship, gave an entertainment in one of Honolulu's theaters to a crowded audience. The following morning the *City of Sydney* continued its voyage. The winds remained still, the sky clear, and the water calm. Plenty of amusement was provided on board. Only once did the waves don their white caps only to roll quietly along, dis-

On 29 November, the *City of Sydney* entered the Fijian Islands port of Kandavu, simply an assemblage of rude native huts and a few one story buildings, a village occupied by 150 natives here and there white men. Although lacking even a wharf, Kandavu had the best harbor to be found in the Fijian group, and was selected on that account by the PMSS Co. for transferring mails and passengers to vessels bound for New Zealand. As soon as the anchor dropped, the natives gathered about the ship to sell vegetables, fruit, shells, war-clubs and other curiosities, and to dive and swim for coins thrown into the water. A number of the company went ashore on boats. While wandering about the place, Charley Seeley, the clown, found a soft spot, and with the exclamation, "Here's a good place to practice!" immediately turned a somersault. The natives yelled and caused the party on shore to think they were being attacked. When the true cause of their cries was discovered, a large crowd gathered and Seeley, John Smith and William "Bud" Gorman took off their coats, and did a row of flip-flaps and other acrobatic performances, which astonished the natives.¹⁰ One of the head men presented Seeley with a huge war-club as a token of his esteem, and the crowd followed the tumblers around, gazing at them in amazement. The youthful portion of the people caught the "circus fever" and before the boats left for the ship were risking their necks in attempting to imitate what they had seen. Seeley soon earned the nickname of the "Fiji favorite" by the rest of the company. Menagerie exhibitions were also given on board for the amusement of the local natives.¹¹

The steamer arrived in Sydney at daylight, 6 December 1876. The distance travelled, according to the ship's log, was 6,730 miles, one of the longest runs a circus ever made. The company landed in fine spirits and by noon were at their hotels. The animals were brought out safe and sound and in good form. Two monkeys and a pony died on the voyage but their deaths were from natural causes and not by the sea journey. It was thought the giraffe would suffer and a bet had even been laid in San Francisco that it would

Sydney then had a population of some 80,000 inhabitants, while the adjoining districts numbered 55,000 more. The *New York Clipper's* correspondent confidently wrote that the circus "bids fair to coin money here." Although the 1873 visit of Chiarini was regarded by some Australian circus men as one of the best foreign shows to visit the colonies and although Australians had seen menageries of wild and exotic animals before, Cooper, Bailey & Co. probably possessed a more extensive company and a finer collection of animals than had ever appeared in Sydney before. The exhibition had been extensively advertised in the city by the show's advance agents, J. B. Gaylord, R. G. Ball, H. P. Lyons, and G. Agrati. A crowd of between ten and fifteen thousand people were assembled along the wharfs to witness the arrival and welcome the "Yankee Wild Beast Show" as the colonials popularly termed it.¹²

Advertisement for opening of the first Cooper & Bailey Australian tour in Sydney's *Town & Country Journal* of December 2, 1876. Courtesy of State Library of New South Wales.

Forty six performances were given in Sydney over nearly four weeks.¹⁴ The company included James Robinson, the champion bareback rider of the world;¹⁵ Nat Austin; Charles Seeley; Miss Pauline Lee; Madame Cottrell; John Cottrell; William "Bud" Gorman; Fred Barclay; Madame D'Atallie and her "pupils" Addie and Eugene; the Walhalla Bros; Senorita Zenobia; M. F. Young; Professor George Johnson; J. S. Leopold; and John Smith. Several of these performers, as we shall see, became so enamored of Australia during their visit that they remained behind to join local circuses.

The side show did well as Ann E. Leak, the armless woman, drew much attention. The side show also included "cosmorama views and serpents."¹⁶

A concert was inaugurated toward the close of the stand and proved a popular draw. The usual program included: a grand overture by the orchestra, introductory exercises by the company, a se-

rio-comic song by Patti Rosa, Dutch comicalities by George Davenport, song and dance by Robert Scott, banjo solo by Lance Lenton, clog dance by Patti Rosa, double song and dance by Gibbons and Davenport, Irish character song by Charles Verner, musical sketch "Dot Leettle Flute" by Lance Lenton, Sailor's Hornpipe by Miss Verner, and a song *The Irish Emigrants* by Robert Scott and Patti Rosa.¹⁷

A ten piece Melbourne band, under the direction of Professor W. Stoneham, "an accomplished and experienced musician," was engaged for the first Australian tour and joined the company in Sydney for the commencement of the tour.¹⁸ Although this was apparently not a regular circus band, Stoneham appears to have contracted his band to large circuses from time to time. He was listed as the bandmaster for Chiarini's 1880 Australian tour.

The Cooper, Bailey & Co.

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management and performers stopped over in hotels, the proprietor generally in the best, the performers in the next best, and so on. When James Robinson was engaged for the Australian tour, he was the only rider available and he was able to dictate his own terms to Bailey. His salary would be \$500 per week, work or play, and expenses would be paid for his horses and family. But Robinson also insisted on inserting a clause in the contract that stipulated that he was able to be put up in the same hotels as Bailey. This annoyed Bailey so much that he stopped at boarding houses all the time during the first Australian tour.¹⁹

The first week of the opening Sydney season was "a dull one," it being just before the holidays, always a slow time for amusements in Sydney. The second and third week witnessed large houses, however, while the fourth week was light. As a whole the season was regarded a successful one, although the *Clipper's* correspondent cautioned that the "very fine business" that was done was hardly good enough to warrant the risk and expense incurred. The show was well advertised, well managed, and placed before the people of Sydney in an excellent manner. Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s format of two shows a day proved, to everyone's surprise, to be successful.²⁰

The show closed its first Sydney season on 12 January 1877 and the following day left for Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, by the steamship *Macedon* on 13 January. There was an unpleasant trip of three days down the rough Australian coast until the *Macedon* docked at the Australian Wharf in Melbourne on 16 January.²¹

American showmen took a keen interest in Australian circuses and theaters and many were willing to make the long voyage here, provided conditions were favorable. For this reason, the *New York Clipper* kept a close eye on the Australian theater scene, reporting both when business was prospering and when it was depressed. An "Australian Letter" appeared irregularly in the magazine in the late

The Cooper & Bailey show on the lot in Sydney, Australia in 1876. Pfening Archives.

19th century, while American actors touring Australia often shared impressions of the place with readers back home.²² Much of the raw material in this article, and especially what follows, is extracted from the *Clipper's* Sydney, Melbourne and other Australian-based correspondents, as well as the letters that Cooper and Bailey's press agent, W. G. Crowley, diligently sent to the editors of the *Clipper* each month while on tour. These letters provide a poignant glimpse of life and conditions in Australia at that time, together with the valuable perspectives, in Crowley's case, that only a visitor could provide.

Melbourne

Cooper, Bailey & Co. took possession of the western side of the swampy flat which at that time lay between St. Kilda Road and South Melbourne, where "an amphitheater [of canvas] had been erected for it."²³ The propinquity of this site to the river allowed the transfer of the menagerie and paraphernalia from the steamer to their temporary home without having to pass through the busy part of the city.

The operation of landing the company from the *Macedon* was smoothly executed with considerable skill. From within the ship's hold the animals and properties were carefully brought onto land by means of a steam winch, ropes and pulleys. The animals included a hippopotamus in his big ornamental water tank, elephants large and small, wart hogs, horses and other animals. Dis-mounted wagons and scores of wheels were trundled ashore. The great crowd that assembled necessitated the disembarking of the elephants being postponed, and it was dark before any of them came ashore. All of the animals excited universal attention as they were marched along Flinders Street, the camels and other beasts by daylight, and the elephants after dark. To the young people

who had gathered on the wharf to watch the unloading the reality of such strange animals was beyond their conception.²⁴

The main entrance, 20 feet wide, lead to the menagerie, a spacious tent of 160 by 75 feet. Three wide staircases led from it, one leading to the chairs and dress circle, another to the stalls and pit, and the third to the pit of the circus. The big top was about 300 by 120 feet, contained two rings, the inner one, 42 feet wide, being used for equestrian performances, and the outer one, a passage, seven feet wide, for the parade of animals. Facing the dress circle was the entrance to the dressing-room, and the top of this entrance was occupied by the band in their handsome uniforms. The dress circle comfortably held 600, the chairs 300, stalls 800, and the pit about 5,000. Particular attention was paid to the comfort of visitors to the pit, the seats being erected at a far less acute an angle than those of any other circus which had previously visited Melbourne. The interior of the tent was handsomely decorated with flags of all nations. The whole of the structure was erected in a substantial manner in six days, under the direction of Mr. Campbell, foreman of the well-known firm of Oldfield and Lindley. The ground plan and laying out of the structure, and the general supervision of the construction, was undertaken by Signor Agrati.²⁵

A grand parade was given through the streets of Melbourne on the morning of 18 January. The procession, carnival style, was a sensation and opened the eyes of the citizens of Melbourne to the marvels which had arrived in their midst. This was the Great Moral show, the one patronized by the clergy, and Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s caravans were adorned with parables from the scriptures.²⁶ Soon after 8 o'clock on the morning of 18 January, spectators gathered in Swanston Street, two hours ahead of the appointed time for the procession.

So extraordinary an impression did the parade make on the people of Melbourne that a florid contemporary account of the parade is worth producing in its haunting entirety: "If Messrs Cooper, Bailey and



Co. do nothing else, they may take credit to themselves for having caused the congregation of one of the largest assemblages of people ever witnessed in the streets of Melbourne. When it was first announced that it was the intention of these spirited circus proprietors to initiate their season in Melbourne by a street procession on a grand scale, the matter aroused but little attention. Many thought that it could never be permitted to take place, in consequence of the danger that it was imagined would attach to such an exhibition. On the other hand, many regarded the announcement as merely one of those tricks of the trade—a good show gag—and believed that the grand procession would turn out to be something very ordinary indeed. By degrees, however, it leaked out that there was something bona fide in the promise, and that the procession would really be one of a character never before witnessed in this city. Camels in a procession have been seen in Melbourne before, but elephants harnessed to vehicles are quite a novelty to the Victorian youth, most of whom have never seen these monsters. This event was therefore looked forward to by young Australia with eager interest, and consequently this morning the youngsters turned out in great force, although it must be admitted that the oldsters were not less anxious to obtain a view of a procession which rumor said would not only be grand, but would also be quite a novelty anywhere outside of the United States. For once, rumor was tolerably correct, and therefore the tens of thousands of people who lined the streets were not disappointed. It is to be feared, however, that to the circus will have to be attributed a most deplorable falling off in the attendance at the various schools, and no doubt not a few youngsters, in their anxiety to study natural history in a practical manner, have been guilty of the offence known at school as 'wagging it.' At any rate, in the crowd which was about the city today were to be seen a good many youngsters with their school books in their hands, who would probably have to pay the penalty on the discovery of their naughtiness. However, whether increased largely by truant school children or not,

The Cooper & Bailey lot in Melbourne early in 1877. Courtesy Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

the fact remains that the crowd in the streets of Melbourne this morning was something almost unprecedented, excepting on one or two very great occasions. It had been announced that the procession would leave the pavilion at 10 am, but hours before that time the crowd commenced to congregate principally about the circus itself. As the hour approached, however, the streets became fairly crowded, and pedestrianism was rendered a matter of some difficulty, owing to the number of people on the footpaths. On the line of march, also, every point of vantage was occupied. Windows, verandahs, and every available place from which a good sight of the show could be obtained, were occupied by a little knot of people; while on the footpaths in Swanston Street traffic was fairly stopped for about an hour. In Bourke Street also the crowd of spectators was very great, and the people being so much scattered about, it would be impossible to estimate their numbers. It was at Prince's Bridge and around the circus pavilions, however, that there was the greatest scene. The attendance at this point was so great that for a long time traffic over Prince's Bridge had to be stopped, in view of the public safety being preserved. A strong body of police under Sub-inspectors Montford and Burton were stationed at these stops and succeeded admirably in keeping order and preventing accidents. It was very amusing to hear the angry expostulations of persons in vehicles who wanted to cross the bridge, some even attempting to force their way through in spite of the police, contending that no one had a right to close the public thoroughfare. This plea, however, did not serve them, and although there might be a question of law in the matter, the police were quite right to take the matter into their own hands, or there would probably have been some very serious accidents.

"The first item of the procession to appear was the band, seated on top of a lions' cage, which was closed in, so that the animals inside could not be seen. This ve-

hicle was drawn by ten fine white horses, and the band and drivers wore uniforms of an imposing kind. After this came out there was considerable delay, and this gave rise to some impatience, but at last, about half-past ten, the procession commenced to form in earnest, and the expressions of wonder uttered by the young Australians as they beheld the different animals were most entertaining. The elephants were the principal attractions of course, but the lion, the tiger, and the leopard, on the top of some of the cages, confined simply by a chain, excited considerable attention. The capers of one of the camels, as he fell into the procession, were the cause of considerable amusement while the steam musical instrument was an object of wonder. Its music, however, cannot be said to be of a very high order, or particularly pleasing to the ear. The horses the company have with them are nearly all the animals, and several of the ponies are beautiful little beasts. At last a fair start was made, and the procession got safely off across the bridge. The traffic, however, had been fairly choked up for some time, and it took nearly an hour before it could be safely drafted off into its usual channels, and distributed over the city without accident. This was however eventually done with the vehicle and horse traffic, there being but one slight accident, occasioned by a restive horse, that knocked down some half-dozen people, but did not do them much injury. As soon as the procession had got fairly out of Bourke Street, however, a rush was made for Elizabeth street, in expectation of the return march. The post office steps and other elevated spots were at once crowded, although the spectators would probably have several hours to wait before the procession returned. Of course, an immense concourse of youngsters followed it all round, and Collingwood, Carlton, and the other suburbs touched, were all alive with persons who preferred that the show should come to them rather than that they should go to the show. The procession itself was one of great splendor, and certainly unprecedented in the annals of colonial history. The first to show over Prince's Bridge was a buggy drawn by a pair of

cream-colored ponies, and containing the proprietors; and next in order, but a little in advance of the cavalcade, came a very lofty van, drawn by no less than ten spanking greys, with a band of thirteen performers perched upon its top, and discoursing sweet music along the line of march, under the direction of Professor J. Kinslow, to the utmost satisfaction of the innumerable young people crowding the thoroughfares. Then came a procession of ladies and gentlemen on horseback, attired in the usual gaudy [attire] of circus riders, prancing along two abreast, and looking the very pink of the forest riders of the olden time, in their fancy decorations. So far the curiosity of the onlookers was merely aroused, but when the undisputed king of the forest, the lion, made his appearance on the top of a large van, drawn especially in his honor by four horses, pent up astonishment could no longer restrain itself, but breaking forth, greeted the beast with a round of applause. He did not seem to be in the least way affected, but lay at full length calmly surveying the crowd, while its tamer, Professor Geo. W. Johnson, occupied a seat at the extremity of the roof, attired in a splendid mailed suit, and apparently carefully overlooking his pupil. Two closed-in vans followed it in quick succession, each drawn by two horses, but as the public could see nothing but the fantastically dressed drivers, little interest was evinced.

"One of the greatest attractions of the 'moral show' now made its appearance, causing such an extraordinary amount of excitement among the lookers on that it was feared some injury would be done to the ungovernable throng which thickly lined each side of the street, as it swayed to and fro to get a glimpse of the crusaders. This exhibition consisted of a large van drawn by three magnificent elephants in tandem, and two trained horses in the shafts, with a rather morose-looking individual, said to be a baby elephant, standing on the roof of the van, and two small trained dogs lying at the baby's heels. Baby, indeed; one would rather be inclined to admire him at a very considerable distance than make acquaintance with him without a proper introduction. Not that he is dangerous or vindictive; oh, no; but still he hardly looks 'childlike and bland' to a casual observer. The elephants seemed to submit calmly enough to their fate, and dawdled up the street in the quietest of moods. Another cavalcade of mounted ladies and gentlemen, variously decorated in circus costume, passed before many admiring eyes, for the mounts were excellent and the attires extremely pretty. A two horse covered-in van, with a large tiger perched upon its

top, under the immediate supervision of the professor, next made its appearance, and provoked much criticism and laughter, for few of the rising generation could look calmly upon the old rogue's set figure and malicious twinkle of the eyes, as he surveyed the crowd, without being reminded of the early lessons installed into their minds of his forest feats and predilections. He took it all calmly, and appeared utterly indifferent to the admiration and surprise he evoked. Next came a van of monkeys, but they were all invisible, with one exception, where an audacious pug flattened his 'nose' by making frantic efforts to take a view of the crowd through the grating in the front of the van. Foiled in the attempt, he grew desperate, and insisted upon keeping his eye at the bars, in defiance of the howling of his engaged companions. A passing remembrance of poor Burke and Wills flashed across our mind as a tandem team of camels dawdled slowly along under the rein of a small army of supernumeraries. With the assistance of two shaft horses they drew a large van, and went on their way moodily. Following these came a dromedary, ridden by a Japanese, and next in order two baby elephants drawing small Roman chariots, driven respectively by a young girl and boy, gracefully attired in togas. They seemed well trained and behaved most becomingly. The ponies, four in number,

he accordingly behaved himself. There were followed by several covered-in vans, painted upon each side with pictorial extracts from the scriptures of a very excellent quality; and last, but not least, of the very lengthy procession, thundered the mysterious looking steam piano, puffing away in a very noisy and unmusical manner. Occasionally, along the line of march, the maestro di piano vamped an air, but without instilling into the public anything like a partiality for music manufactured by steam process. The procession was undoubtedly one of the largest and most novel ever witnessed in the colony, and the enormous number of people who thronged the thoroughfares spoke very highly in favor of the show and its uncommonness. It proceeded along the line of march as advertised, and returned to the tents, via Elizabeth street, about half-past twelve o'clock."²⁷

The exhibition opened that evening, but only to a "light house." Perhaps Melbourne thought it had seen all there was to be seen for one day. But the four week Melbourne season was fully as great a success as the previous Sydney engagement had been, drawing thousands of visitors every day. The Melbourne season closed on 17 February and the company then commenced a tour of the provincial centers of the colony of Victoria, beginning at Kyneton by two special trains of twenty-eight carriages and wagons, its first use of any of the Australian railways. This was the first railroad show ever organized in Australia. The first train was loaded with the gilded, brightly painted circus vans, while the second contained the horses, mules, zebras, camels, and elephants, the latter flourishing their trunks above the vans in which they were confined. The people of Melbourne turned out in full force again, this time to witness the departure.²⁸

Three of the small English-style coaches in one of the trains were provided with berths affording excellent sleeping accommodation, enabling the various performers to take their necessary rest when travelling. The members of the company consoled themselves with the thought that the crowded conditions would be easy for a few nights and, in any case, far preferable to the comfort of sleeping in a pole-wagon.²⁹

At least one Victorian boy set down his memories, much later in life, of Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s visit to his town, even if his recollections were a little faulty in some areas: "I woke one morning to find the township plastered with beautiful posters. There were 24 sheeters, 6, 3 and single sheeters, as well as day bills. The sight of these wonderful pictures made a very great impression on me. It was that won-



Parade wagon illustration from a Cooper & Bailey courier. Pfening Archives.

followed and were ridden by a trained dog and a pair of most unfriendly looking baboons, one of whom sat upright, bare back, and held the reins in a most professional like manner. The leopard was the next most attractive spectacle, as he appeared standing on the top of a large van drawn by a pair of horses. His keeper kept guard within a few feet of him; and although he appeared perfectly at liberty to leap into the crowd below, he treated the idea with the greatest scorn. No; he was no common leopard, but one trained to obey his master's least command, and

derful show, the great Cooper & Bailey's. Well, I went along to see the show come to town. In the distance I could hear the beat of the drum, and as they came nearer, the sight simply amazed me. The band wagon, drawn by six lovely horses, with plumes on their heads, and the band in gay uniforms with helmets. And could they play? Following the band came the riders on fine horses and the clowns on donkeys, then the menagerie, the performers in their costumes and countless ponies, piebalds, skewbalds, black, white and bays and the lumber wagons, etc. They pulled on to their location not far from the school. They soon got a move on, unharnessed the horses, then out came the poles, canvas, pegs etc. They marked out the pitch, put up the king pole, spread out the canvas, drove in the pegs, put the side poles around, and up went the canvas. And how wonderful it all seemed! They dug the ring, put up the stringers and jacks for the seats, also the bandstand and the ring curtain, and laid plenty of white sawdust in the ring, with a different design in the center of the ring of red sawdust, and then they were all set for the evening. There was a man called 'Lamps.' He attended to the kerosene lamps and there must have been a hundred of them hanging from the center pole. . . . They had a giraffe which they had billed, but it had died, so they had it stuffed and every now and then they put its head through the top of the sidewall for a few seconds, and the people thought it was alive. They also had a steam organ in the show. At night they started with the usual band playing in the front of the entrance. They opened their show with a grand parade of horses, ponies, camels, elephants and lady and gentleman performers, then an animal act, the decanter act by a couple of Javanese [sic; Japanese?], a riding act and somersaulting, aerial act, the hurricane hurdle, the two clowns, a riding act, Madam De Itallie [sic] in a heavy cannon act, a lady riding act and clown. Then there were the Walhalla brothers, and an American Indian act and James Robinson, champion rider, throwing somersaults on a bareback horse and the lion tamer, Professor Johnston."³⁰

Ballarat

Rather than give a town by town description of Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Australian itinerary, I have selected just one major country center, the Victorian town of Ballarat, to examine the impact that the visit of the circus had on provincial people.

With a population of 40,000, Ballarat

was the largest provincial city visited in Victoria. The Ballarat public's appetite had been whetted by the great display of colored bills and pictures that had adorned every available wall and hoarding in town for the previous week or two, not to mention the reports from the Melbourne newspapers of the show's reception there. The two special trains arrived at Ballarat's Western Station, from

PROF.
GEO. W. JOHNSON,



THE DARING
KING OF LION CONQUERORS

Prof. George W. Johnson's lion act closed the Cooper & Bailey performance in Australia. Pfening Archives.

Stawell, early on the morning of Wednesday, 28 February 1877. A crowd congregated at the Western Station by 4 a. m. that morning, the anticipated time for the arrival of the two trains. But it was not until the city's gas was turned off, and the broad daylight stole in under the large arch that faces the east, that the two trains arrived.

Active preparations were soon under way on for the erection of the tents; and the large wagon loads of canvas, poles, ropes, and other gear gave some impression of the vastness of the structure to be erected. About 8 a. m., however, the rain came down and a strong wind set in. Owing to the rain that prevailed that day, the tents could not be erected and properly fitted in time. The opening matinee performance had to be deferred until the following day, Thursday, by which time all the necessary arrangements could be completed. The circus management resolved to remain on Friday as well, so as to give their advertised number of performances in Ballarat.

As elsewhere during the show's tour of Australia, much interest was manifested, both by local people and visitors who had come from outlying towns, in the unloading of the animals and the work of erection of the tents in Ballarat's Market Reserve. School children arrived from Smythesdale and Buninyong, and family parties drove in from Bungaree and other outlying towns, but were disappointed to find that that there was not the slightest hope of seeing the show that day. Many of the hotels in and around Lydiard Street were crowded with the visitors from the country.

Only one ticket was required for both circus and menagerie, with admission prices being set at three shillings for seats in the pit, and five shillings for cushioned seats in the dress circle. Children under ten years of age, were admitted at half price. The doors were opened at 1 p. m. and 7 p. m., with the performances commence one hour later respectively, thus allowing time before each performance for an inspection of the menagerie. A special train was to run from the nearby township of Creswick to Ballarat in time for the evening performances, returning to Creswick late in the evening for the convenience of people there.

The mayor of Ballarat East requested of the circus management if free admission could be given to the old men of the Benevolent Asylum, which was acceded to. The children of the Orphan Asylum were also admitted free. At the opening Thursday matinee, the "large oval tent" was well filled by over 6,000 people, including about 1,500 school children, but at the evening performance it was crammed with nearly 9,000, one of the largest gatherings ever assembled under cover in the city. Many of the children found a resting place on the straw-covered floor. Nearly 10,000 people had tried to obtain admission, but hundreds had to be refused. The crush outside was "something fearful," with one lady being thrown by the crowd against the ticket car with such force that she fainted.³¹

Although Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s planned to return to Melbourne after their provincial Victorian tour, and reopen at "popular prices,"³² the real itinerary shows that the company only returned to Melbourne in order to ship for Adelaide, the capital of South Australia.

Adelaide

In 1877 there were only two feasible ways to transport a circus between Melbourne and Adelaide, either 600 miles overland through a dry, dusty country; or by one of the several steamers that sailed regularly between the two places, involving a voyage for two days and two nights in view of a monotonous, sandy coast line. The voyage was usually stormy, and choppy seas usually prevailed. Australian circuses were accustomed to the former route, playing the small, isolated townships along the way. Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s International Circus went by steamer, sailing from Melbourne on the morning of 7 March and arriving at Port Adelaide on 9 March.

It was a comparatively pleasant passage, during which the company enjoyed kite-flying in the day time. On the second

day out, three large kites were raised from different parts of the vessel at the same time and the holders of each strove to send his kite up higher and out farther than the others. Over a mile of twine was used by each kite flyer but two of the kites were lost. The third, held by James Robinson, was brought safe to the deck again.

The steamer arrived at Port Adelaide, seven miles from Adelaide, and connected to the city by rail. The company entrained to the town in the small compartment carriages, English style, while the wagons went up the road. Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, had a population of 30,000, although a population of 60,000 was within a radius of ten miles from the City Hall. The town was well designed and possessed several buildings of which any city might feel proud. There were parks filled with flourishing shrubs and trees adorned the city in several places. The Botanic Gardens contained a small zoological collection that included three Bengal tigers, three leopards, a tiger cat, an Arabian camel, several zebras, deer, and a full collection of Australian marsupials.

Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s visit to Adelaide had followed closely after the visits of another American show, John Wilson's Circus, which played to good houses in Adelaide for two weeks before going up the country; and Australia's biggest circus at that time, Burton & Taylor's Grand United Circus Company. Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s opened in Adelaide 10 April. During its ten days in the South Australian capital, performances were given afternoon and night, the tent being comfortably filled every afternoon, and crowded almost every night. Crowds of people were turned away three nights out of the ten. The receipts averaged over US \$3,500 a day, at prices of \$1.25, 75 cents and 50 cents. The show was splendidly advertised, and people came from far and near to see it.

The Cooper, Bailey & Co. programme as presented in Adelaide was as follows:

1. Grand Entree.
2. Performing Elephant. Introduced by G. W. Johnston.
3. La Perche, Satsuma and Little All-Right.
4. Principal Pironette and Somersault Act. Fred Barclay with Nat Austin, Shakespearean Jester.
5. Single Trapeze. Signoretta Zenobia.
6. Jockey Hurdle Act. William Gorman.
7. Les Deux Comiques. Walhalla Brothers.
8. Riding Cynocephalus, introduced by James Robinson.
9. Feats of strength and dexterity con-

cluding with the firing of a heavy cannon borne on the shoulders of the French female Sampson, Mme. D'Atallie assisted by her pupils, Addie and Eugene.

10. Principal Equestrienne Act. Mdle. Pauline Lee, Charles Seeley, grotesque clown.

11. Juggling on a Running Globe. John Cottrell.

12. Act of Changes. Mdme. Cottrell.

13. Athletic Sports of the Arena. The Company.

14. Indian Act. Fred Barclay with John Cottrell, clown.

15. Gymnastic Exercises. Walhalla Brothers.

16. Act of Horsemanship. James Robinson.

17. Performing Den of Lions, introduced by G. W. Johnston.³³

Ringmaster Nat Austin introduced each performer with extravagant eulogy until he came to the last when he could only throw up his hands and gasp feebly "R-Robinson, The Champion!"³⁴

Cover of the Cooper & Bailey & Co. 1876-77 Australian tour route book. Circus World Museum collection.

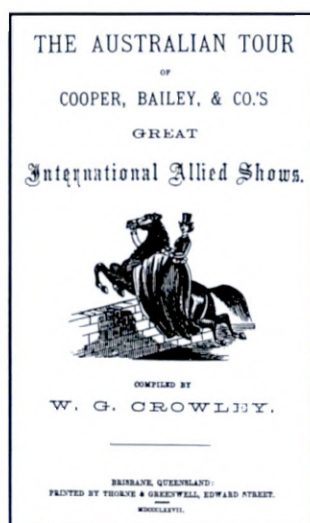
After playing Adelaide the major inland towns of South Australia, which were serviced by the colony's railway lines, were visited for a brief tour, 22-26 March. The contract with the South Australian Government Railway dated 13 March 1877 made provision for a train similar in size and composition to the one that had been used out of Melbourne for the Victorian tour the previous month: two goods wagons, one long timber truck, nine short timber trucks, five high side wagons, six cattle trucks, one first-class carriage, four second-class carriages, two heavy brake vans (one for each end of the train).³⁵ Crowley wrote that it was "a rough trip. At Gawler, a dust storm came up during the afternoon show, filled the tent and blew out several side poles. This caused a panic. People howled and hurried. About 500 children screamed and fell through the seats, the seats following them. In a few seconds the place was empty, the people were re-admitted after it was over but the night show was very light. The next day at Burra Burra, it commenced raining before they got the canvas up, nor could they erect the circus top. The country was hilly and rocky, the water for miles around running into a creek, beside which the show stood. At 6

a. m. you could have walked dry-shod over this creek; at 6 p. m., it was a raging torrent 25 feet deep. Great difficulty was experienced in getting the tents etc. off the grounds. They were finally placed safely on the train, however."³⁶

Tasmania

Another steamer, the *Claude Hamilton*, was chartered to take the show to Tasmania, the island colony across the straits from the southern tip of mainland Australia, at the conclusion of the South Australian tour. In Tasmania, only the cities of Launceston and Hobart were visited, the two being connected by Tasmania's narrow gauge (3' 6") railway. Launceston less than forty years before had seen the beginnings of the Australian circus industry when an innkeeper named Robert Radford opened his Royal Circus in a building adjoining his Horse & Jockey Inn on York Street.

Two diminutive Tasmanian trains were used to convey the company the 133 miles across the island from Launceston to Hobart. The first train, comprised of about 16 trucks and carriages, left Launceston at midnight and arrived in Hobart at 10 o'clock the following morning, Wednesday 4 April. This first shipment included most of the menagerie and a few of the leading members of the company. The second train left Launceston at 2 o'clock that morning and arrived in Hobart at 11:30. This shipment included four elephants and camels. Another train arrived later in the day. Hobart's *Mercury* reported that: "Everything was landed in excellent condition, which says much for the system which the Manager of the Main Line observed in 'embarking' his 'heterogeneous' crew. Nor were the employees less successful in 'landing' everything on the platform. They worked together with a common will, and no matter what the bulk of the vans they had to shift or the security with which they had been affixed to the railway trucks, their removal to the ground was the work of a 'jiffy.' Indeed it was frequently remarked that the Yanks knew 'how to do a thing' and what it was worth, without troubling themselves about the rule of three or the rule of thumb; and really their smartness was astonishing. Their preparations for erecting the tents were also marked with great activity. . . . No less than 53 pieces of rolling stock, independent of engines and



tenders, were employed in conveying the various vans, and if the three trains were formed an unbroken link extending over-attached together, they would have a distance of upwards of a sixth of a mile."³⁷

Although a small city, Hobart furnished the circus with generous audiences the three nights it was there. Between 3,000 and 4,000 people were present on the opening night and the performances were liberally and favorably reported in the press during the brief season. Evidently, in such a small city Cooper, Bailey & Co. did not think it necessary to advertise the show in the press on any great scale. The daily advertisements that appeared in *The Mercury* were for the Museum and Concert company alone (and, thus, may have been inserted by George Middleton). Crowley wrote of the Hobart date that: "The rough element is very numerous here, and showed its nature during the last performance, by cutting the canvas and doing other mean acts. As the concert was proceeding, they rushed in and Seeley made one desperate bluff and rushed out, while Mr. Bailey called for the 'Queen' and the extinguishment of all the lights."³⁸

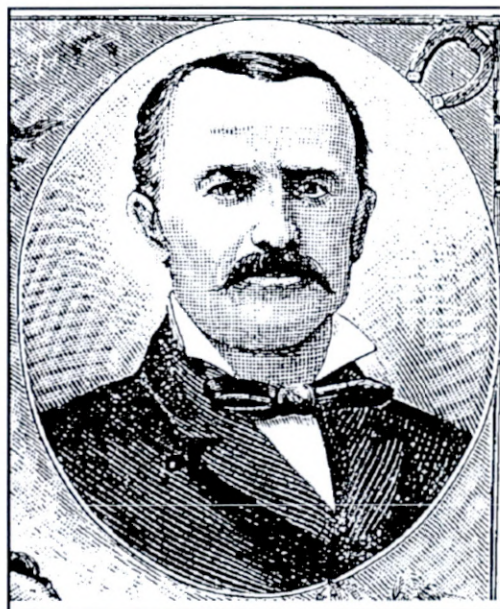
This description makes for a fascinating comparison with the memories of the old Australian circus man, Mervyn King, who first visited Hobart as a 14 year old acrobat with the St. Leon & Sole's Circus in 1922, forty-five years after the visit of Cooper, Bailey & Co. King recalled: "Circuses were always very popular in Tasmania and they done good business over there. They liked circus. In Hobart we played in The Domain. There was always a brawl on this Hobart ground. Hobart would always be good for that. There were always young fellows walking around, nowhere to go and nothing to do, looking in the tent. Louts used to have little sledges and used to slide down the embankment and finish up in the tent. You chased them away and you would find that they had left a rip in the side of the tent."³⁹

New South Wales

From Hobart the show returned to Sydney by steamer, opening there on Saturday 12 April, 1877, just before the close of the season of another visiting American circus, John Wilson's. On the voyage from Tasmania the giraffe, one of the great attractions of their menagerie, was lost.

H. P. Lyons later recalled: "On leaving Hobart in the ss *Claude Hamilton* off the Iron Pot Lighthouse a squall arose which soon became a gale, and the steamer having nothing in the way of cargo on board but the circus and the animals began to roll, the animals being badly knocked

about. The poor giraffe spread herself, trying to steady herself, got strangled, died in the night and was buried at sea at Mr. Bailey's request. I was on board and saw the carcass thrown over. Mr. Bailey was dreadfully cut up, as he was very fond of the animal, which had cost him and Mr. Cooper (who never came to Australia) 1500. The year they brought her, giraffes were very rare in America. They also lost two tiger cubs the same night. How the story of the mechanical giraffe got into print was in this way. In Tasmania, the newspapers scarcely mentioned the rare specimens of natural history which Cooper & Bailey had brought to their doors, but wrote columns on the steam piano and other curios of that sort. At my dictation our press agent, Mr. W.



James Robinson, Bailey's highly paid rider. Pfening Archives.

Crowley, wrote the story of the mechanical giraffe and the newspapers thought it a big sell and copied it."⁴⁰

On the morning prior to its Saturday evening opening, the company was to give a "grand procession" through the streets Sydney. The city authorities had evidently tempered their attitude to the big parade, which had not been allowed on the show's previous visit, after hearing of the success of the Melbourne procession. But the Sydney parade had to be held over until the Monday after the opening, and Bailey felt obliged to apologize to the people of Sydney in the columns of the *Sydney Morning Herald* for its deferral: "Upon arriving here [on Friday morning] from Hobart Town, it was discovered that the large band chariot of the company, in which was stored the wood,

rope, and paraphernalia used exclusively for the street parade, had not arrived from Melbourne owing to the failure of the steamship company having charge of its transportation to ship the same. It had been placed upon their dock in Melbourne and should have been sent here some time since according to agreement. Its whereabouts being unknown, the telegraph was used and it was then ascertained that the missing chariot was on board the steamship *You Yangs*, en route for Sydney. As the parade, if given without the band chariot, and the special wardrobe with it, would be shorn of much of its beauty, the management have determined to postpone the parade until Monday next at the advertised hour, and over the advertised route. . . . Hoping that

this explanation will prove satisfactory to the public, I beg leave to subscribe myself the public's obedient servant. James A. Bailey, Manager, Great International Allied Show."⁴¹

At the close of the return three week Sydney stand the animals, tents and paraphernalia were transported through the night to Redfern Station and loaded on a special train of thirty-five cars to convey the company to Orange, the first port of call for its tour by rail of the colony. From Orange, the circus proceeded along the Great Southern Line to Bathurst, Windsor, Penrith, Liverpool, Goulburn, Murrumburrah, Yass and Parramatta. Returning to Sydney, the company then shipped up the coast 75 miles to the port of Newcastle. Shortly after landing there, a fearful storm played havoc with the tents and cages, nearly resulting in the escape of a lion and lioness. A panic ensued among the crowd, but the animals were kept in

check by their keeper who was much mauled and injured during the affray.⁴² From Newcastle, another tour by rail was undertaken, for only a few stops along the still unfinished Northern Line of the NSW Government Railways. Returning to Newcastle, the show then shipped for Brisbane on 2 June for Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, where it opened on 6 June.

G. W. Crowley, the show's press agent, compiled a 16 page route book giving a detailed account of the Australian tour from the time of leaving San Francisco, on 8 November, 1876, until the closing of the season in Brisbane, on 18 June 1877. The pamphlet, giving a complete account of personnel and itinerary, and a narrative of the show's travels, was published in Brisbane during the show's stay there. In a chapter headed "Probabilities," it was mentioned that the menagerie was to have been taken from Brisbane back to

Sydney, N.S.W., and placed in winter quarters while the rest of the circus was reorganized for a proposed tour of India. The show would play at ports along the Queensland coast as far north as Cooktown, and then ship for India by way of Java and the Far East. The band, which was organized in Australia, was to have accompanied the show as far as Cooktown, but evidently was disengaged from the show prior to its departure from Brisbane as the only music on hand when the show opened in Cooktown on Monday, 9 July 1877 was an old fashioned hand organ. Although comical, everybody seemed to enjoy the music it produced.⁴³

A beautiful, full column length illustrated advertisement in the *Cooktown Courier* heralded the opening of Cooper Bailey & Co.'s Great International Circus, and the company now included the Royal Tycoon Troupe of Japanese. This appears to be the same troupe of Japanese that had appeared in Sydney during April 1877 when Cooper, Bailey & Co. returned to that city, and had travelled north after the close of a lengthy stay there to join the show in time for its departure for the east. This Japanese troupe appears to have been in addition to the Japanese, Satsuma and Little All Right who had performed *La Perch* with the company in Adelaide, and who appear to have joined Cooper, Bailey & Co. there, possibly after leaving Burton & Taylor's Grand United Circus. In his route book Crowley mentioned Satsuma and Little All Right in the "Block Built Pyramid and Contortion Act," while other Japanese, Chokichi and Kameda, were also listed as members of the company. The Royal Tycoon Troupe of Japanese evidently completed the tour of the east with Cooper, Bailey & Co., and returned to Sydney with the show in No-

vember 1877, there to strike out on their own again as the Royal Tycoon Circus.

Along the north coast of Australia, the ship had to wait for the tide to come in before it could negotiate a sandbar. George Middleton, the sideshow manager, got the captain's permission to go ashore "in the wilds" to shoot a kangaroo. After being ashore a while he finally shot a kangaroo and dragged it down to the steamer, where it was taken aboard. Everybody had a look at it. The captain finally ordered the men to take it back to the cook. Some of the women folk exclaimed that they wouldn't eat kangaroo. The following evening after dinner when everyone was on deck, the captain asked them if they had enjoyed the dinner. "How did you like the soup?" "Fine!" the women replied. Then he told them it was kangaroo tail soup. They had eaten kangaroo tail soup without realizing it.⁴⁴

The Cooper and Bailey circus met some financial setbacks before the conclusion of its first Australian tour. Before the show sailed for India, James A. Bailey sought to rid himself of some of his high salaried artistes. Approaching his star rider he remarked: "Mr Robinson, I am shipping the show to India next month, and I am sorry that the company will be called upon to endure the hardships of terrible heat and other adverse conditions of that country. I am going to release you from your contract at this time so that you can make a more favorable engagement."

Robinson replied: "Mr. Bailey, I have a contract with you which reads that I am

Unloading Cooper & Bailey wild animals from the steam ship *Macedon* in Melbourne. From *Illustrated Australian News*, February 21, 1877. La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria.

to appear with your show for a certain length of time at a certain salary per week, haven't I?"

"Yes," replied Bailey.

"Well then, you can pitch your tents in hell if you want to, but I'll be there to ride."⁴⁵

The steamer *Atjah* carried the circus to the East Indies, landing it at Surabaya, Java. Due to the extreme afternoon heat, performances were given at night and very early in the morning. Stops were also made at Batavia, Samarang and other ports in Java, including one where the circus was guaranteed a fee of US \$10,000 for giving performances during the coronation ceremonies of a local prince. But the heat was so great and business generally so poor that Middleton, who was in charge as manager, concluded that it would be advisable to abandon the proposed visit to India and return to Australia. A plague in India was apparently another reason for the cancellation of the proposed visit. At Batavia, Middleton closed the show and settled the balance due on the salary of James Robinson, who with Mrs. Robinson, Pauline Lee and Bud Gorman, departed the company and sailed for Marseilles, en route for Paris where they joined James Myers' American Circus.⁴⁶

SECOND AUSTRALIAN TOUR

James A. Bailey did not accompany the show on its tour of the Far East but instead returned to the United States after the Brisbane season in order to engage fresh talent and new attractions for the menagerie for a second tour of Australia--and a rider to replace James Robinson.⁴⁷

Bailey had been so heartened by the success of his first Australian tour that he apparently declared that he would come every year with fresh animals.⁴⁸ Judging by the success that Middleton had had with his sideshow, and having successfully assuaged colonial tastes, Bailey knew exactly what to look for on his return to New York. In the *New York Clipper* of 25 August 1877 appeared the following advertisement: "CURIOSITIES WANTED FOR AUSTRALIA. Living curiosities of all descriptions. Such as GIANTS, DWARFS, FAT WOMAN, ETC., also an EDUCATED HOG. AND GOOD SIDESHOW SOLICITOR. Would like to here from 'BATES' the Kentucky Giant, ANNE SWAN, COL. GOSHEN, ELI BOWEN, JENNIE QUIGLEY, SARAH BELTON, HANNAH BATTERSBY, PROF. COLLIER, LOU BONER, JOHN D. EVANS. Long engagements guaranteed and fares advanced. All those wishing engagements as above will please write or telegraph quick, also send photograph to J. A. Bailey of Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Allied



LADING WILD ANIMALS FROM THE STEAMSHIP *MACEDON* FOR COOPER AND BAILEY'S CIRCUS

Shows, care of James Reilly, 12, 14, and 16 Spruce Street, New York.⁴⁹

In another column of the same issue of the *Clipper* appeared this advertisement:

"WANTED: CIRCUS TALENT FIRST-CLASS AND SENSATIONAL Artists of Acknowledged Ability, Both Male and Female, in all Branches of the profession for A TOUR OF AUSTRALIA. LONG ENGAGEMENTS GUARANTEED of six months to a year to riders, gymnasts, leapers, tumblers, equestriennes, acrobats, clowns, volteurs, contortionists, trapezists, etc., etc. ALSO WANTED. LIVING CURIOSITIES OF ALL DESCRIPTION, TRAINED DOGS, GOATS, MONKEYS, BEARS, BUFFALOES, HORSES, MUSEUM STUFF, BALLOONS, BALLOON ASCENSIONIST, ETC. ADDRESS IN HASTE, COOPER, BAILEY & CO., Proprietors of Great International Allied Show, care of James Reilly, 12, 14, and 16 Spruce Street, New York."

In less than three weeks, on 15 September 1877, Bailey was able to send from New York to San Francisco his first shipment of animals, canvas and paper in preparation for Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s second Australian tour. Four cars were completely filled and went directly to San Francisco by a fast freight line. Among the animals was a double horned rhinoceros, the first and only one ever sent to Australia. There were 24 large bales of canvas, averaging 600 lbs. in weight. The largest tent was a 150 feet round top with two 50 foot middle pieces. The paper filled forty boxes. Two more carloads were shipped a few days later containing other pictorial printing, lithographs, and a Mardi Gras wardrobe.⁵⁰

The following new artists were engaged for the second Australian tour:

Martinho Lowande and son, Mdlle. Le Granville, Fred Lazelle, Jimmy Reynolds, Cassim and Fritz, James J. Maffit, Frederico, Jorges and boy. All of these artists entrained from New York for San Francisco about 1 October. Four days later they shipped out on the steamer *City of Sydney* together with the new circus canvas, equipment and animals to Sydney, this time by way of Auckland, New Zealand. Another very delightful trip across the Pacific was experienced, the only accident of the voyage occurring during the passage from Auckland, New Zealand to Sydney, when the ship's machinery failed.

Before it could be repaired, the ship drifted for about three hours in a very rough sea.

A similar itinerary to the first tour was employed, with visits to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, together with a selection of regional centers in each colony, followed by a visit to the island colony of Tasmania, before proceeding across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand.

On arrival in Sydney, the company found the city gayly decorated in honor of the birthday of the Prince of Wales.⁵¹

It appears that a rendezvous was made in Sydney with the remnants of the main Cooper, Bailey & Co. company which was glad to get back to Australia. Another visit had apparently been made, on the return voyage from the Indies, to Java

and a very large lion had been secured during the visit to Java.⁵²

The company boasted "new and Leviathan tents manufactured expressly at a cost of £3,000 and comprising an area of a million yards of canvas." After two weeks of hard work on the part of the canvasmen, five large tents and a number of small ones were erected on Bell's Pad-dock, at the corner of William, George and College Streets, a fairly central location in Sydney although not customarily used for circus performances. The main tent required two center poles, "as it contained two rings and the outer circle for the opening processions." The other four tents were for the museum, menagerie, concert and side show.⁵³

Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Second Australian Tour opened on Monday, 26 November 1877 to a full house. As the "new and greatest show on earth" it was an even larger company than on the previous visit, a two ring affair, probably the first time Australians had seen this institution peculiar to the American circus. The mammoth show was again well received by the Sydney public. The opening evening had scarcely commenced when a very severe rainstorm came on, which lasted about one hour. The following night a drizzling rain fell before the show opened but the house was full. On the Wednesday night it rained again, but the people flocked from all directions. Overwhelming performances, and it was no matter of surprise to find from 4,000 to 5,000 spectators at the two rings each evening. While the critics found that the double ring distracted the attention rather too much, the general public took a liking to the arrangement.⁵⁴

The Brazilian rider who had been secured as a replacement to James Robinson, Martinho Lowande, created quite a sensation in his carrying act with his son Tony. Mons. Loyal in his flying trapeze act proved "a good card" as did Batcheler, the leaper, in his double somersaults. Mdlle. Cordelia, the vaulting female equestrienne, won for herself a reputation for daring equestrianism.

Mdlle. De Granville, the lady with the iron jaw, also made a good impression upon the people. She met with an accident during the second week of the Sydney season which almost resulted in her death. As she was being drawn up into the dome of the tent, suspended by her teeth, one of the small flags used in dec-



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100 BOURKE STREET EAST

Program published by Cooper & Bailey for the return engagement in Melbourne in December 1877. Circus World Museum collection.

where "business was large" but where the Japanese boy billed as Little All Right died of cholera while several of the canvas men also died of the fever. Nat Austin and his wife were engaged for another year, but James Robinson, his wife and son, and William Gorman and Polly Lee, had gone onto France. A fine ourangatang

orating the inside of the canvas caught around the rope, was drawn through the pulley-block and wedged in its wheel, just as she reached within five feet of the ceiling of the tent. A signal was made to let her down. The men below slackened the rope, but it would not yield. There, at the height of forty feet, Mdlle. De Granville remained hanging by her teeth. The rope was quickly drawn under her so that she could catch hold of it. But when she withdrew from her mouth her leather mouth tip and let it go, her weight on the other side of the rope withdrew the flag caught in the pulley-block wheel. She suddenly dropped the five feet, as the mouth-tip end of the rope was drawn up to the pulley-block. She partly lost her hold on the rope, and slipped down the entire length of the rope, the skin on both of her hands and on her fingers being badly peeled off. Had the mouth tip gone through the pulley-block, she might have been killed or severely injured. As it was, her shoulder and breast were bruised, but not seriously, and in a week she was able to resume her duties.⁵⁵

The circus left Sydney on 13 December 1877 for a brief tour of a few New South Wales provincial towns and then shipped for Victoria. In Melbourne "immense business" was done but not quite up to what was anticipated. A great loss was experienced through the death of the hippopotamus, which took place quite suddenly. Bailey felt the loss most acutely, as it was one of the main attractions of the show.⁵⁶

Hart of Cincinnati and the best other engravers of the United States, such as the Philadelphia Ledger Print, furnished the show with a new collection of posters for the second tour, unequalled for artistic excellence, beauty and size. On their first visit, the American showmen found Melbourne the worst place in Australia for poster billing, as there was hardly a suitable stand in the city, unlike Sydney where there were "plenty of gaps." On their return visit to Melbourne, Cooper, Bailey & Co. were confident of obtaining "plastering" in Collins Street, Melbourne's 5th Avenue.⁵⁷

A tour of Victorian provincial centers followed the Melbourne engagement with some major centers being visited that were not included in the previous year's itinerary. The business done during the week in the Albury district, on the NSW-Victorian border was large, but, owing to

an economic crisis in Victoria, the towns the show had visited the previous year did not turn out so well as expected.⁵⁸

From Victoria, the show went to South Australia and Tasmania, and then crossed the Tasman Sea for a tour of New Zealand, at that time just another colony of

closing night as on the opening. The show cleared no less than US \$75,000 during its tour of New Zealand.

At the conclusion of the Auckland season, the equipment and personnel were loaded on a chartered sailing clipper, *Golden Dawn*, a splendid vessel of 1418 tons, and shipped on or about 5 May 1878 for a remarkable voyage across the South Pacific to Callao, Peru, a long and risky jump of over seven thousand miles. The voyage of the "circus argonauts" must rank as one of the most extraordinary odysseys undertaken by a circus. The company were on board for 59 days, 54 days being out of sight of land. Bailey chartered the ship for the sum of £1,500.⁶⁰

Through inadvertently eating a box of sulphur matches, which one of the men had left carelessly nearby, on the day before the shipment, the elephant Titania died shortly after departing Auckland. The carcass was thrown overboard. The last seen of her was by the puzzled fishermen aboard the ketch *Diamond* as her swollen carcass, with ear flaps extended, floated on the waves outside the Auckland Harbor. The fishermen returned to their ports with tales of the sea "sarpint." The Cooper, Bailey & Co. people learned many months later that the tides carried the carcass back to Auckland where the people concluded that the *Golden Dawn* must have been shipwrecked.⁶¹

During the stormy voyage another elephant was attacked by the big rhinoceros which somehow broke out of its pen. A great hubbub resulted and added to the terrors of the trip. In one storm along the [New Zealand?] coast 14 ships were lost but luckily the

Golden Dawn pulled through.

"We were sure glad when we reached Callao," wrote Middleton in his memoirs.⁶²

South America

Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Circus arrived safely in Lima, Peru on 6 July 1878, and opened to only small business. They met Chiarini there and drove him into Callao where the show opened on 23 July. Bailey began cutting down the number of agents and side show people employed. Performances were subsequently given in the cities of Valparaiso and Santiago before the company was shipped through the Straits of Magellan to Buenos Aires. Visits to Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro followed. The South American tour was

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6.—Ground and Lusty Tumbling by the entire Company.

7.—The Great BRAZILIAN BARE-BACK RIDER MARTINHO LOWANDE in his WONDERFUL AND THRILLING EQUESTRIAN FEATS, assisted by his sons Masters TONY and MARTINHO.

8.—The Madon Hercules, Professor Laby in his exercises with Cannon Balls, and Professor Richards, American Champion Club Swinger.

9.—Japanese Juggling, by Awati Catandini.

10.—The Countryman's visit to the Big Show, Walter Aymar.

11.—Professor George Wondolfe, the Business Wonder, in his astounding Contortions.

12.—The two Comies, Messrs Cassin and Fritz.

13.—Mistake Lowande will appear in his Electrifying Art—styled the Fight of the Warden, in which he rides, drives, and handles seven horses at one and the same time.

14.—The performance will conclude by Prof. G. W. Johnson, the American Lion King, entering the den of savage Kaffir Lions.

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J. FITZSIMONS, Manager.

Program issued by Cooper & Bailey in Wellington, New Zealand in April 1878. Circus World Museum collection.

the British Empire. Middleton rightly described New Zealand in his memoirs as "a very beautiful land, [with] beautiful harbors and attractive cities with a fine climate."⁵⁹

New Zealand

Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s visited both the North and South Islands of New Zealand, performing in Christchurch for nine days and turning away people from their doors every night, before proceeding to Wellington and Auckland. The one week stand closed in Auckland to immense business, drawing as large a house on the

completed in November 1878. According to Bud Gorman, the show lost about all the money it had made in Australia during the South American tour.⁶³

Aftermath: USA

Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Circus returned to New York in December 1878, after covering a distance of 76,000 miles during the two year tour. Despite the South American losses, James A. Bailey came home with "enough profits in his ticket wagon" to purchase the Howes' Great London Show, a railroader since 1875, at a forced sale for the modest sum of \$23,000. Bailey reorganized and formed a new and bigger circus, Cooper, Bailey and Co.'s Great London Circus and Sanger's Royal British Menagerie.⁶⁴ The season of 1879 found the Great London Circus in intense rivalry with the leading circus enterprise in America, P.T. Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth. The competition eventually resulted in a merger of the two circuses. When the 1881 season commenced, James A. Bailey was a partner with P. T. Barnum. They operated their combined circus as Barnum and London's, but by 1888 the name was altered to the familiar Barnum and Bailey's.

The Australian tours seem to have been under the sole, immediate direction of James A. Bailey as his partners, James E. Cooper and Robert S. Hood, rated not a mention in the annals of the tours. In August 1877, during his brief return visit to the United States, Bailey purchased Hood's share of the show for \$1000 in cash and seven promissory notes of undisclosed amounts.⁶⁵

My special thanks to several people who kindly examined the manuscript for this essay prior to its finalization, namely Fred Braid MBE, Ballina NSW; Dr. Richard Waterhouse, Department of History, University of Sydney; and Fred Pfening III. Thanks are due also to Fred Dahlinger, Jr. of the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin for forwarding James W. Shettel's 1931 article of which I was previously unaware.

Footnotes:

1. According to a report in Sydney's *The Bulletin* of 17 February 1900, Rowe visited Australia a third time as one of the agents for Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s show. However, a report in *The Lorgnette*, a Melbourne theatrical broadsheet, of 9 February 1884 said that Rowe made his return visit to Australia as an agent with Chiarini's Circus which is probably the more accurate account. Rowe spent his final years in San Francisco, a convenient place with which to meet up and impress any showman intending to visit Australia with his knowledge of the country.
2. These circuses and the dates of their visits were as follows: J. A. Rowe's North American Circus, 1852 and 1858-1859; Cooke, Zoyara and Wilson's, 1866; Chiarini's Royal Italian Circus, 1873, 1880-1881, 1884-1885; Wilson's San Francisco Palace Circus, 1876, 1881-1882; Cooper, Bailey and Co., 1876-1877, 1877-1878; W. W. Cole, 1880-1881; Fryer's, 1886; Sells Bros., 1891-1892; D. M. Bristol's Circus and Eques-

curriculum, 1897-1898; the Flying Jordans, 1897-1900. There are suggestions that other American circuses, such as those of H. C. Lee, Davenport, and W. C. Coup, visited Australia, but these remain unconfirmed. Several smaller American circus-type combinations came, and several American circus men, such as William Worrell, Charles Gardiner, W. H. Foley, the Walhalla brothers, and El Probasco formed successful companies in Australia, usually comprised of local performers.

3. C. G. Sturtevant, "Foreign Tours of American Circuses," *Billboard*, 2 July 1927, p. 41.
4. Quoted in James W. Shettel, "The Great International Circus in Australia," *The Circus Scrap Book*, No. 11, July, 1931.
5. *Ibid.*
6. "The Circus in San Francisco 1849-1950," research file in the San Francisco Public Library.
7. *Austral Review*, Vol. II, No. 8, pp. 30-32.
8. W. G. Crowley, *The Australian Tour of Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s Great International Allied Shows* (Brisbane, Qld.: Thorne & Greenwall, 1877), pp. 7, 11.
9. "The Circus in San Francisco 1849-1950," *op. cit.*; Shettel, *op. cit.*; *New York Clipper*, 20 January 1877, p. 351.
10. Gorman was the Barnum & Bailey ringmaster in 1912 when the Australian equestrienne, May Wirth, made her American debut in Madison Square Garden.
11. *New York Clipper*, *op. cit.*; Sturtevant, *op. cit.*
12. *New York Clipper*, *op. cit.*; Anon., *Around the World in Three Years*, (Buffalo: Courier Co., 1880). A "wild beast show" was the common English term for a menagerie.
13. *Austral Review*, Vol II, No. 8, pp. 30-32; Sturtevant, *op. cit.*; Crowley, *op. cit.*
14. *New York Clipper*, *op. cit.*
15. Born James Fitzgerald in Boston in 1835, Robinson had served his years as an apprentice with such promise that instead of being made a pad rider, he was trained as a bareback equestrian, a far more difficult and polished style of riding. In Washington in 1857 Robinson won from James Hernandez the title of "champion rider of the world."
16. Shettel, *op. cit.*
17. Shettel, *op. cit.*
18. Crowley, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
19. George Middleton, *Circus Memoirs* (Los Angeles: G. Rice & Sons, 1913).
20. Letters dated Sydney, N. S. W., 11 and 12 January 1877 reproduced in *New York Clipper*, 24 February 1877.
21. *New York Clipper*, 24 July 1877.
22. Richard Waterhouse, *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville: The Australian Popular Stage, 1788-1914*, (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1990).
23. *New York Clipper*, 24 July 1877.
24. Unsourced Melbourne newspaper clipping, January 1877, in James A. Bailey scrapbooks, McCaddon Collection, Princeton University.
25. Unsourced Melbourne clipping, Bailey scrapbooks, Princeton.
26. *Imperial Review*, March 1892.
27. "The Circus Procession," in *Melbourne Herald*, 17 January 1877.
28. *New York Clipper*, 24 July 1877; Sturtevant, *op. cit.*; unsourced Ballarat clipping, Bailey scrapbooks, Princeton.
29. Unsourced Bendigo clipping, Bailey scrapbooks, Princeton; *New York Clipper* 24 July 1877 and 28 April 1877, p. 37.
30. Charles Frederickson, "Circus Memories," in *The Outdoor Showman*, February-March 1949. Frederickson obviously confused James Robinson with Cooper, Bailey & Co.'s somersault rider, Fred Barclay. His description of "countless" horses and ponies, if correct, suggests that the show purchased or hired a lot of stock while in Australia as they apparently brought only 20 horses with them on the first tour. His memory of the stuffed giraffe shows that he had succumbed to the popular but mistaken rumour, the origin of which is explained later in this article.
31. Unsourced Ballarat clippings, Bailey scrapbooks, Princeton.
32. *New York Clipper* 24 July 1877, p. 37.

33. All Adelaide data is from *New York Clipper*, 2 June 1877.
34. *Imperial Review*, March 1892.
35. Contract in McCaddon Collection, Princeton.
36. Quoted in Shettel, *op. cit.*
37. *The Mercury*, 5 April 1877.
38. Crowley, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
39. Mark St. Leon, *The Silver Road, The Life of Mervyn King* (Springwood, N. S. W.: Butterfly Books, 1990), pp. 98-99.
40. "Mummer's Memories," *Sydney Sportsman*, 12 August 1908.
41. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 April 1877.
42. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 May 1877; *New York Clipper*, 14 July 1877, p. 127.
43. *New York Clipper*, 11 August 1877; Middleton, *op. cit.*
44. *Cooktown Courier*, 4 July 1877. Much valuable work has been done on the troupes of Japanese acrobats active in Australia in the 1870s by Mr. D. C. S. Sissons of the Australian National University. I am indebted to his notes in attempting to piece together this likely train of events that outlines the engagement of the Japanese with Cooper, Bailey & Co.
45. Sturtevant, *op. cit.*
46. Shettel, *op. cit.*; Sturtevant appears to have erred when he wrote in his 1927 *Billboard* article that "the show proceeded to India. Seven weeks of immense business was done at Calcutta, followed by visits to Allahabad and Bombay where this part of the tour terminated." There is no evidence that Cooper, Bailey & Co. reached India. Shettel also effectively debunks the popular yarn that mahogany crates, allegedly used to ship Robinson's horses, were subsequently sold by Robinson on the Marseille waterfront for a small fortune. The crates were made of bamboo.
47. *New York Clipper*, 11 August 1877; Shettel, *op. cit.*
48. *Austral Review*, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 65-66.
49. *New York Clipper*, 25 August 1877, p. 175.
50. *New York Clipper*, 29 September 1877, p. 215.
51. *New York Clipper*, 8 September 1877, p. 191; 26 January 1878, p. 847.
52. *New York Clipper*, 5 January 1878, p. 828.
53. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1877. *New York Clipper*, 26 January 1878, p. 847. It would appear that the £ was worth about \$4-\$5 U.S. at the time.
54. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1878, *New York Clipper*, 26 January 1878, p. 847; *Town and Country Journal*, 1 December 1877.
55. *New York Clipper*, 26 January 1878, p. 847.
56. Letter from Melbourne dated 31 December 1877, reproduced in the *New York Clipper*, 16 February 1878, p. 871.
57. *Austral Review*, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 65-6.
58. *New York Clipper*, 8 June 1878, p. 87.
59. Middleton, *op. cit.* According to notes gathered by Richard E. Conover, the show was shipped from Melbourne to Adelaide on 18 February where a 10 day stand was made. The show was then shipped to New Zealand, presumably by way of Hobart, Tasmania. The contract price for this voyage was £2000. The contract, dated 19 January 1878, gave Bailey the option to drop the Adelaide stand if he wanted thus saving £1300 on the contract price, and the further option of a 360 day lease. These clauses suggest that Bailey's immediate plans were by no means definite.
60. Letter from Omer, New Zealand, dated 23 April 1878, reproduced in the *New York Clipper*, 8 June 1878, p. 87; Sturtevant, *op. cit.* The contract is in the McCaddon Collection.
61. *Austral Review*, Vol. II, No. 8, pp. 30-32; Middleton, *op. cit.*
62. Sturtevant, *op. cit.*; Middleton, *op. cit.*
63. *New York Clipper*, 17 August 1878, p. 167; Shettel, *op. cit.*; Conover notes.
64. Conover notes.
65. Crowley, *op. cit.*, p. 12. It is presumed that the "J. E. Cooper" listed in some of the shipping lists of the first tour was James E. Cooper, Jr., Cooper's son, who accompanied the show as its press agent according to Crowley's route book. No doubt Cooper, Sr. thought it advisable to have someone present to monitor his financial interest in the enterprise.

First Time Ever! - It's Christmas Time With Tracy Heaston at the Calliope

Songs that Everyone Loves

Christmas Calliope



TRACY HEASTON

Vol. 6 • 35 songs

The Artist:

Tracy Heaston has been involved with music and the circus since he was a small child. He played the calliope for the first time under Merle Evans at age 11 when the Ringling Brothers Circus came to Los Angeles in 1969. Tracy has a B.A. in percussion instruments. He has been featured in many parades, circuses and fairs, on radio commercials, in two movies, and in many other promotions. He is noted for his feather touch on the calliope.

The Calliope:

Calliopes were originally steam-pressured instruments in which each valve released steam to a different sounding pipe. Tracy's calliope was first purchased for a river boat, *The Cotton Blossom*, and has been rebuilt and put back into service, operated now by a gas-powered blower. Very few of these rare instruments are still in existence. They are used today only on special occasions and expositions.

Christmas Calliope (Volume 6) 35 Songs: Jingle Bells • Let it Snow • White Christmas • The Christmas Song • Winter Wonderland • First Noel • Angels We have Heard on High • Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer • Frosty the Snowman • Sleigh Ride • I'm Gettin' Nuttin' for Christmas • We Three Kings • Silent Night • Away in the Manager • It Came Upon a Midnight Clear • We Wish You a Merry Christmas • Caroling, Caroling • O, Holy Night • Santa Claus is Coming to Town • Jolly Old St. Nicholas • I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus • Here Comes Santa Claus • Silver Bells • Deck the Halls • Joy to the World • What Child is This • Jingle Bell Rock • Toyland • Dance of the Sugar Plums • March of the Toys • Holly Jolly Christmas • Here We came a Wassailing • I Saw Three Ships • Carol of the Bells

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Dealer inquiries on these items invited!

One-time exhibitions, known colloquially as "one night stands," in show business and interpersonal relationships, have a great advantage over those events that last several days or months in that press reviews are of little consequence since they appear after the show has left town. The legitimate theatre, motion pictures and the like can suffer if they get a bad review. However, rock concerts, circuses and other types of one-day showings are in the next town when the reviews come out and seldom feel the onus produced by a dissatisfied reviewer.

This was made apparent to us by the example of the Barnum Caravan of 1851-1854, which had the worse press of any travelling show we have researched, and yet was a financial success. In these days of almost instant communication such general dissatisfaction might travel ahead of the showman, but in the 1850's the only contact one paper had with another was in the exchange system, whereby newspapers sent each other their latest issue by mail.

Until 1874, this exchange system was handled by the Post Office Department at no cost to the newspapers, thus there was a great deal of interchange. Even so, two printers had to be fairly close to one another for a bad review by one to be cited by another.

Had Barnum's Caravan (titled "Barnum's Asiatic Caravan, Museum and Me-

BAD PRESS, BIG CROWDS: THE BARNUM CARAVAN OF 1851-1854

By Stuart Thayer

nagerie" in 1851 and 1852; and "P. T. Barnum's Grand Colossal Museum and Menagerie" in 1853 and 1854) been owned by anyone else, our attention might not have been drawn to the multiplicity of bad reviews, but in 1851 Barnum was at the height of his powers, having just managed the Jenny Lind tour and owning as he did the Barnum Museum in New York.

In his autobiography, Barnum said "In 1849 I had projected a great travelling museum and menagerie, and, as I had neither time nor inclination to manage such a concern, I induced Mr. Seth B. Howes, justly celebrated as a 'showman,' to join me, and take the sole charge. Mr. Sherwood E. Stratton, father of General Tom Thumb, was also admitted to partnership, the interest being in thirds."¹

We reported what was, perhaps,

The Car of Juggernaut, or a wagon very similar to it, is pictured in this untitled poster, probably from the 1870s. Circus Galleries collection. Ringling Art Museum.

the outstanding aspect of the show in a previous issue of *Bandwagon*, the importation of nine elephants from Ceylon.² They arrived on May 4, 1851 and the show opened the next day.

It was not a circus, in the proper meaning of the word, but more of a side-show and museum, as its title indicated. Tom Thumb was the best-known of its attractions. S. K. G. Nellis, the armless man, a fat-boy, and

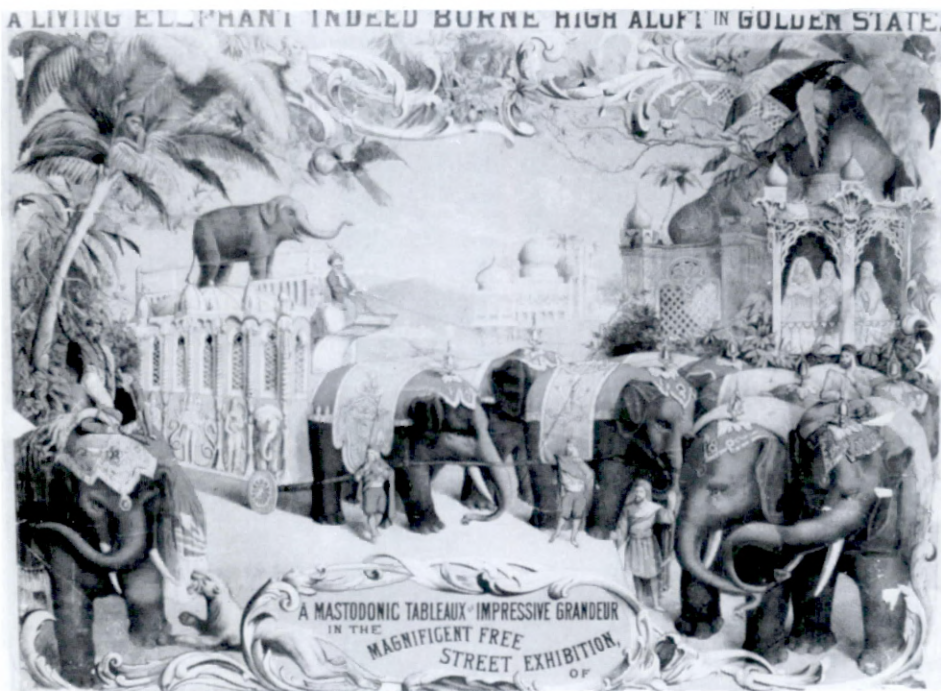
Alviza Pierce, the lion trainer, made up the rest of the human equation. A wax-figure exhibit of mannequins of every president of the United States (there had been thirteen to that date, counting the incumbent Millard Fillmore) was included as well as a wax-works diorama of temperate and intemperate families, and a collection of objects from Barnum's Museum, which advertising said, "the full particulars of which it would be impossible to give within the limits of a newspaper advertisement." These were archeological, botanical, ethnic and cultural items of all kinds, probably retired goods from the New York institution. The elephants, excepting a calf among them, were hitched to a large parade wagon which was called "The Car of Juggernaut," as in Hindu mythology.

It sounds, on paper, as if it was a show worth paying twenty-five cents to see, which was the price of admission in the first season. But if one reads the reviews one gets a different picture.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* of May 30, 1851 said the museum portion was "a most disreputable and shabby affair." Further, the wax figures of the presidents did not resemble those worthies. The "Intemperate Family" (part of the wax museum) "is nothing but a charnel house and putrid carcasses." The menagerie, the writer complained, had not more than seven or eight species. Of the great carved "Car of Juggernaut," he said, "it was a complete sham, being a vehicle of plainest ordinary construction and painted in the most irregular manner with some shabby carvings." He ended his description by pointing out that ten elephants were advertised to pull the big wagon, but only seven were to be seen. All this was in the first month of the season.

The condition of the "Car of Juggernaut" might be explained by an item in a Massachusetts paper stating that students in Princeton, New Jersey, prior to the Brooklyn date, had run it from the College to the Canal and pushed it in the water, considerably damaging it.³

The *Syracuse Standard*, in the city



where they appeared on September 5, described the show as being composed of "half-grown elephants and deformed children and men . . . a travelling humbug."

That first season was spent in New England and New York. The second season it went into Canada, Michigan and Ohio. Its press was no better. The *Wooster Democrat* of September 16 reported the show to be the greatest humbug extant. The advertised price was twenty-five cents, yet "for the best part of the exhibition you had to pay fifteen cents extra." We would guess that this was a fee for one of the outside shows.

The ads, unlike those of 1851, said that twenty-five cents was the admission, and listed what one saw for that and said, "No extra charge, under any pretense whatever, let the reports be what they may." This indicates that complaints were getting back to the show.

The *Wooster* reporter went on to speak of "the slanderous representations of Washington, Jackson, Kossuth" and of "that little towheaded, snub-nosed goggle-eyed Tom Thumb strutting on the stage and offering his picture for a shilling."

In Millersburg, Ohio the caravan was dubbed "a collection of old clothes, stuffed and labeled, together with a few animals, mostly rendered harmless from old age and poverty . . . a bushel or two of old bones, pieces of brass, iron, stone and said to have been taken from the moor."⁴

And in Xenia, the *Torchlight* of October 6 said the museum was a humbug exhibiting the baldest of caricatures. In addition, it noted "Extra features were presented for an extra fee, which almost precipitated a riot."

The route in 1853 led through Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois and Wisconsin. By this time Lewis B. Lent was manager and the admission had been raised to fifty cents in the South, thirty cents in the North. The rest of the show remained as it was. This lack of change was possible without fear of falling revenue, as a different part of the country was visited each season.

Brickbats from the press were as abundant in 1853 as before. In Princeton, Indiana, the *Democratic Clarion* of 18 June commented that the wax statuary was a perfect burlesque and slander of the men they purported to portray. The *Rockford, Illinois Rock River Democrat* on August 16 weighed in with the observation that there were seven elephants on the show, which altogether would not make two good-sized ones.

The most sour comment we have found for that year is in the *Mineral Point Wisconsin Tribune*. On August 11 it said "[Barnum's] old dry good box, called the Car of Juggernaut, drawn by six, instead

P. T. BARNUM'S



**GRAND COLOSSAL
Museum and Menagerie!**

THE LARGEST Traveling Exhibit on
In the World, being a combination of all the most
popular and unexcusable amusements of the age, will
exhibit in Pittsburgh, on
Carson street, near Penn street, Fifth Ward,
Monday and Tuesday, June 26th & 27th.
FOR TWO DAYS ONLY.

The peculiar feature of Barnum's Mammoth Museum
and Menagerie, is the combination of a great number of
dissimilar attractions in one exhibition, and for a single
price of admission. The establishment includes a grand
display of
**LIVING WILD BEASTS, CURIOSITIES,
AND WAX STATUARY.**

The performances of the
ORIGINAL TOM THUMB!
Mr. VELL'S, the man without arms! Mr. L'ENGEL, the
Lion King! and other attractions of equal merit.
The public entrance to the establishment, led by the mon-
ster Car of Juggernaut, drawn by a team of
EIGHT ELEPHANTS,
will take place on Monday, the 26th inst.
Admission to the whole, positively only 25 cents.
Children under 2 years, 15 cents.
Doors open from 2 to 6, and from 7 to 9½ P. M.
J.T.W.

Barnum newspaper ad in the June 21, 1854 *Pittsburgh Daily Union*. Pfening Archives.

of ten half-grown elephants, looked very much like the broad side of a barn . . . we received free tickets and so will not charge Mr. Barnum for this notice."

The Caravan spent its fourth, and last, season in Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey. It closed in Brooklyn on October 20, and an auction of animals and equipment was held in New York City on November 15, 1854.

They stopped listing the elephants as numbering ten in 1854, which, in any case, had been true only in their inaugural parade in New York way back in 1851. Even then, we believe they borrowed two animals from Sands, Nathans & Co. just for that one procession. Elijah Lengel replaced Alviza Pierce as the lion trainer, otherwise everything was the same as it had been over the four seasons. And this included the usual diet of negative comments in the press.

"Blind and toothless beasts," the *Buffalo Express* reported, "distorted wax figures and sundry monstrosities, which to see is to despise."

"Old, worn-out lazy lions," said a West Chester newspaper, "several animals in a state of feeble old age," said another in the same town.

The riot that almost occurred in Xenia, as above, finally did happen, but in Lynchburg, Virginia. A report went as fol-

lows: "A terrible row took place at Lynchburg, Virginia last week, between the showmen of Barnum's Mammoth Exhibition and the citizens of Lynchburg, resulting from the great number of extra charges made, notwithstanding the published notice that the whole was to be seen for fifty cents. It was reported that five persons, two of the citizens and three of the showmen, were very seriously if not fatally injured, and many others slightly. The affair wound up by the entire demolition of the ticket office and the destruction of its contents, together with no little incidental damage to the show fixtures. The scene is represented to have been fearful; men, women and children were assembled under the huge tent, and the greatest consternation prevailed."

Yet, as we said, and, indeed as Barnum said, the exhibition was "immensely profitable." The initial investment was \$109,000. We don't know the net in 1851, but in the three subsequent seasons the figure were \$71,000, \$48,547, and \$6,000 as given in various sources. The last year may reflect the cost of the riot in Lynchburg. If the show was as bad as the press considered it to be, how did it survive, why did the public "elbow their way through the crowd," as one observer said, to see it?

The West Chester, Pennsylvania, *American Republican* said, "The papers in every part of the country set the concern down as the greatest humbug of the age . . . this may be true, but what of it? Barnum has made a study of the *genus homo* and he has discovered a great fact, to wit, that there are two animals in the universe that wear long ears."

The writer then went on to give his version of Barnum's thought process. We publish it here because it may be the only explanation of why the Caravan made money that we will ever have: "Acting on this principle, [Barnum] says, 'there are the editors and conductors of papers, they must be my assistants. I will publish flaming advertisements with pictures to match in advance of the appearance of my shows, and in this way I will draw money out of thousands that would otherwise remain at home. Pay the printer a small sum, and I will gain largely,' is his motto. Barnum is one of the wise men of Gotham . . . and 'laughs to kill' at the soft-pated world he has so nicely duped."

Footnotes

1. P. T. Barnum, *Struggles and Triumphs*, (1872 edition), p. 355.
2. Stuart Thayer, "Elephants for Barnum," *Bandwagon*, xxxiv; 3 (1990), p. 30.
3. *Salem Register* (CN), 5 June 1851.
4. *Holmes County Whig* (Millersburg, OH), 9 September 1852.
5. *American Republican*; *Village Record*, both 3 October, 1854.
6. *Cambria Tribune* (Johnstown, PA) 28 August 1854.

STAR BACK REVIEW



Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West, A Photo Documentary of the 1900-1905 Show Tours by Allen L. Farnum (Schiffer Publishing Co., 1992, \$19.95)

On rare occasions large caches of previously unknown circus photos surface. In the 1960s the great Glasier collection became available at the Ringling Museum, and recently the Circus World Museum acquired hundreds of shots of the Sells-Floto Circus in the mid-1920s. Such finds add countless details to our knowledge of the circus as well as bring the historical moment to life far better than any written document. It is therefore no small event in this corner of the world when over 150 new photos of the Pawnee Bill Wild West came to light in this book.

This book's genesis began in the late 1930s when Allen Farnum was shown 155 3" by 4" nitrate negatives by his father to whom they had been given by Harry Bock, an old showman and friend. Although the negatives became Farnum's property upon the death of his father in 1970, he forgot about them until 1984 when he was encouraged by a local antique dealer to find out what the photos were. They turned out to be the fabulous images which make up the balance of this book.

Around 1882 Harry Bock, aka Buckskin Harry, left his home in Hazelton, Pennsylvania to work his way west, finally settling in Wyoming where he worked as a government agent. In 1892 he joined the Pawnee Bill Wild West. He was hired as a cowboy, but doubled as a carpenter. The 1898 Pawnee Bill route book lists him as Harry Bock in the mechanical department and as Buckskin Harry in the performers' list.

He stayed with Pawnee Bill through 1908, although the author states Bock took out the Buckskin Bill Wild West in either 1900 or 1901. While his involvement in Buckskin Bill is murkily documented, there are wonderful images of the show's ticket wagon and a baggage wagon, a real treat for the many aficionados

of small and off-beat shows.

In 1903 Bock joined the Baptist church and during the next five years pursued theological studies between his carpenter work in the Pawnee Bill winter quarters in Carnegie, Pennsylvania. The Southern Baptist Convention eventually assigned him a mission with the Pawnee Indians in Oklahoma, a duty that lasted fourteen years.

His friendship with Gordon Lillie-Pawnee Bill—continued. In 1910 he was a carpenter on Lillie's new home in Pawnee, Oklahoma. In 1933 Lillie wrote Bock about building a prairie schooner for a wild west show he proposed for the Chicago World's Fair. He was the minister at a number of churches in upstate New York until his retirement in 1949. He was killed in an auto accident soon after.

Although Bock's photos were taken with a Kodak roll film camera, they are of exceptional quality. A number of the well known Pawnee Bill parade wagons are shown, many with six and eight horse hitches. Eight pony tableau wagons are included, many of which were previously

Lot scene of Pawnee Bill's Wild West from the book.



This Pawnee Bill Wild West ticket wagon is typical of the high quality of the photos in the book.

unknown to wagon historians. A view of the Sullivan and Eagle steam calliope is another particularly good image.

The wonderful side views of baggage wagons are razor sharp, detailing the construction. One photo shows a refrigerator wagon with slabs of beef hanging from the side. The pole and stringer wagons are pictured, as are the water and ticket wagons.

Of special interest are a half dozen images of the loaded flats, all showing the old-style wooden cars which were standard for the period. Likewise, the book includes a number of great lot scenes, including one of the parade forming, one of the candy stands, and one of the side show banner line.

Photos of the performance in the canopy arena, and of individual performers complete the selection of photos. Overall, it is an impressive record of the Pawnee Bill Wild West when it was at its height. This 11" by 9 1/2", 130 page volume is a must for circus historians and model builders. Fred D. Pfening, Jr.



87. Crowds at Benton, Illinois October 28, 1903

Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West

*A Photo Documentary
Book of the
1900-05 Show Tours*

Occasionally, some notably historic piece of Americana — artifacts, photographs, or written material — turns up from forgotten storage. Such is the case with the original find of one hundred and fifty-five pristine negatives of Pawnee Bill's Wild West

show made on tour between 1900 and 1905 by cowboy/amateur photographer Harry Bock. Author/photographer Allen Farnum of Salem, Oregon made new prints of the hand-carved wagons, tents, midway crowds, Indians, cowboys, cowgirls, equipment, and buffalo. To enhance the collection, he carefully researched the adventure-filled life of Major Gordon W. Lillie/Pawnee Bill — buffalo hunter, plains scout, White Chief of the Pawnees, Wild West showman, Oklahoma land boomer, oilman, banker, and early conservationist. "Pawnee Bill," contemporary and lifelong friend of Buffalo Bill Cody, was Buffalo Bill's main Wild West show competitor and eventually became Cody's financial savior. Included with the biography of Pawnee Bill is also one about the photographer, "Buckskin Harry" Bock, another frontier pioneer, cowboy, and carpenter who worked many years for Pawnee Bill until becoming a Baptist missionary to the Pawnee Indians. Together their lives provide a fascinating background to accompany this visual close-up look at a period in life that has gone forever — the Wild West show of the early 1900s — the forerunner of our modern rodeo. This is truly a one-of-a-kind photo documentary which offers western, historical, and tent show buffs a visual look back in time with exceptional detail and clarity. *Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West* belongs in all museums and collectors' libraries.

FIRST
EDITION
of

"...the finest reference
available on that show."

**Pawnee Bill's
Historic
Wild West**

To: Aldor Enterprises, P.O. Box 7078, Hollywood Station, Salem, Oregon 97303

Please send _____ copies of *Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West* book at \$19.95 apiece, plus postage and handling of \$2.00 for the first book. For each additional book, add 75 cents. Enclosed is check or money order for the total amount of _____. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

NOTE: Autographed copies available by request.

The McPherson *Freeman-Vim* on August 21, 1891 carried the following announcement: "Circus Coming."

"The Great International R. R. Shows will give two grand exhibitions in McPherson on August 22nd. They will pitch their tents back of the water-works building, near U. P. station. This is the largest show traveling through the west this season, and every one should avail themselves of the opportunity to see it. A grand free exhibition will be given on the grounds at one p. m."

Following circus day the *Freeman-Vim* had little to say except that, "The circus was reported good, what there was of it," and "The circus Saturday beat the Davis crowd in the park (political rally)."

Wichita was lucky enough to get The Great International Railroad Shows for two days, September 1 and 2. An ad in the *Daily Eagle* described the aggregation as "A mighty combination, eclipsing all past efforts, the one grand amusement enterprise; the only big show that will visit your city this season."

It was, of course: "MIGHTY, MORAL, MERITORIOUS," and "The crowning triumph of the present century. An avalanche of star attractions. The only show of strictly new and original features."

There was no mention of a parade, but the ad did call attention to an unidentified "Grand Free Exhibition at 1 p. m. on the show grounds."

The *Wichita Eagle* reported following the opening exhibitions that, "the International Railroad circus, whose tents are pitched at the corner of Fourth Avenue and First Street gave two exhibitions yesterday. They were greeted with only a small audience in the afternoon but in the evening the tent was comfortably filled. Several who attended were much surprised at the performances, they being superior to what one would expect from outside appearances. They have several very fine performers. The same show is billed for this afternoon and evening at the same place."

"The circus last Monday [sic Tuesday]," according to the *Wichita Kansas Star*, "brought out quite a large number of people which was only a sample of what would have been had there been a menagerie connected with it and a street parade."

"The streets were well lined last Tuesday with country people watching for the circus parade. They came, they saw, they went--home."

The *Wellington People's Voice* had little

THE ONLY TRIPLE-HORNED UNICORN **SUBLIME and SUPERIOR** **to SIMILITUDE**

Chapter 8, Part One
 By Orin Copple King

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to say concerning the exhibitions of September 5: "The International circus is billed for Wellington Saturday. It was at Wichita Tuesday and the *Eagle* says they gave a surprisingly good performance."

"Two circuses in one month; Wellington is getting reckless," Wallace & Company, the second show, played Wellington on September 23.

The Forepaugh season of 1891 in Kansas began with a short note in the *Williamsburg Enterprise* on April 11 that, "Joe and Lew Steppan started to Philadelphia this week to help make music for Forepaugh the coming season."

Featured in 1891 was,

"The greatest Aerialists of All

The Celebrated HANLON-VOLTERS,

"The supreme and exalted masters of their dangerous act. The highest salaried aerialists on all the great earth. The only aerialists who receive the princely salary of \$775 per week will for the first time under canvass do their wonderful and fearless act. Scientific, skillful and marvelous act, their astounding triple bar leap for life throwing double somersaults 60 feet long while flying 40 feet high in mid-air. Whirling, flying meteors."

James E. Cooper, manager of the 1891 Adam Forepaugh show. Pfening Archives.

Before the show appeared in Kansas, the July 14 *Pittsburg Daily Headlight* carried the following report which in various forms appeared in nearly every Kansas newspaper: "BROKE HIS NECK. One of the Hanlon brothers dies in the Ring. Caused by a crane breaking.

"Clinton, Iowa, July 14. During yesterday afternoon's performance of Adam Forepaugh's show the crane upon which William Hanlon, of the renowned Hanlon brothers, gymnasts, was performing broke and he fell to the ground, missing the net and striking upon his head. His neck was broken and he only lived a few minutes. Doctors McAfee and Burbank said that he probably knew nothing after he struck the earth."

"William Hanlon was 31 years old, born in London,

and had for twenty-four years been associated with the Hanlon-Volter company. Last August he had a similar accident at the Academy of Music, New York, falling from the dome and breaking two parquet chairs. His work was upon a horizontal in the center. Robert and James Hanlon doing the flying trapeze and Robert considered greatest of all gymnasts."

"The remaining two Hanlons continued the performance after William's fall in New York. They will remain with Forepaugh the balance of the season. William left a wife but had no children."

"Coroner Meyers impaneled a jury, who returned a verdict of accidental death exonerating manager Cooper from all blame."

Newspaper advertising for the Pittsburg exhibitions of August 5 began with a two-column ad on July 18 in the *Pittsburg Smelter*. Heading the announcement was "'Vastness, Originality, Abundance'— Its Motto. 28TH YEAR of the colossal time-tried Adam Forepaugh Shows."

"Oldest, largest, richest combination of Circus, Hippodrome, Menagerie, Museum, Wild West exhibition, trained animals, and famous foreign features in the whole world."

"The Crowning Wonder of the Nineteenth Century!"

The lion's share of the advertisement announced, "First season in America of the champion lion king, Col. Edgar Daniel Boone and Mlle. Carlotta, the renowned 'lion queen,' accompanied by their magnificent lion dog, 'Saxon.' 5 Ferocious Lions 5. All let

loose IN A CIRCUS RING. 15 savage lions riding tricycles, playing see-saw, forming high pyramids, harnessed to



chariots, and racing all unshackled and free as when in their forest homes."

It was claimed that the lions had performed 150 times in Paris and 200 times in London. It must have been a comfort to the public to know that, "The arena enclosed by a lofty fence, making it impossible for the lions to escape, insuring perfect safety to the spectators."

Other named performers included Adam Forepaugh, Jr., the Hanlon-Volters, and Capt. A. H. Bogardus. Bogardus and his sons starred in "An entirely reconstructed, renowned and realistic WILD WEST SHOW," presenting every attraction that any such exhibition ever boasted, including Custer's Last Rally.

Col. Edgar Daniel Boone, the Forepaugh show's wild animal trainer. Pfening Archives.

A bit of spice was offered by the "Paris Hippodrome, with all its charming, dashing and daring French female charioteers, riders and drivers." La Parisienne has always been and will always be a stellar attraction.

An advertisement which appeared twice in the *Headlight* featured:

"Daring Riders,
Flying Steeds

Roman Chariot Races

1/4 Mile Race Track

All Kinds of Exciting

Elephant and Camel Races

INSPIRITING HIPPODROME RACES

Roman Standing Races

Male & Female Jockey Races

Hurdle and Flat Races

Monkey and Pony Races

Man vs Horse, and various other races."

It was the "Oldest, Largest, Richest Exhibition in the world with \$3,000,000 INVESTED and \$5,500.00 DAILY EXPENSES," and it belonged to "Jas. E. Cooper, Sole Owner."

The *Headlight*, an afternoon paper, on circus day, was bubbling with circus news.

"C. B. Sweet & Bro. have about ten thousand feet of good new lumber now being used by the Forepaugh circus as bill boards, which will be for sale after August 5th at a bargain; call on them for prices on this.

"Several men were arrested this morning for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. Skinner appointed seven extra policemen for to-day, yet Fred Ramsey was compelled to walk in front of the street car to keep people off the track.

"While the circus will carry a large

amount of money away from our city they will leave several hundred dollars with our business men. The Home Bakery furnished them 400 loaves of bread and over a thousand pastries. The Pittsburg Feed company furnished four wagon loads of feed, while several of our grocery and meat men filled large orders."

"The electric street railway did a fine business to-day. The cars were well filled all day."

Another story was entitled "Exciting Runaway. Quite an exciting affair occurred on east Fourth Street this morning while the parade was marching up Locust Street, through the carelessness (or ignorance) of the driver. A throng of people were standing

on either side of Locust Street watching the parade pass, when a man drove up in a spring wagon and attempted to cross just as the steam calliope was coming up. One of the men who were

standing on the east side of the crossing, stepped in front of the team and told the driver to stop, but he paid no attention until the man stopped him again. Just then the performer on the calliope began to play, which frightened the team and they made a short turn and started down on Fourth, running to Elm and turned north. In so doing sent the driver and two little boys who were sitting on the back seat in the wagon out onto the ground, and both seats piled on top of them. One of the boys was severely bruised and the other one received a sprained ankle, but the expert driver escaped injuries. The team ran one block north and was caught. The affair caused considerable excitement among the women and children who had crowded the street to see the parade."

The *Headlight*, with a few contributions from the show's press agent, ran the following account of the morning's activities: "Show Day.

"At an early hour this morning men and boys who were anxious to see the show trains arrive, began to congregate at the Pacific depot to watch the showmen unload the cars, and at 7 o'clock about 300 had gathered around the depot, but were somewhat disappointed as the first train did not arrive until about 8 o'clock, when

the work of unloading the cars and transferring the wagons to the grounds in the south part of the city began. In the meantime two more sections of the show train arrived and the work continued until about 10:30 o'clock, when the last wagon passed through the city, and by this time the sidewalks were crowded with people, who were eager to see the parade.

"The east bound Santa Fe train had on board about 300 passengers, who were bent on seeing the elephant and monkeys.

"The sidewalk was crowded with men, women and children, until there was hardly room for a policeman to pass. The streets were also crowded, leaving barely room for the procession to pass through, while the front windows in all the buildings, second and third stories were filled.

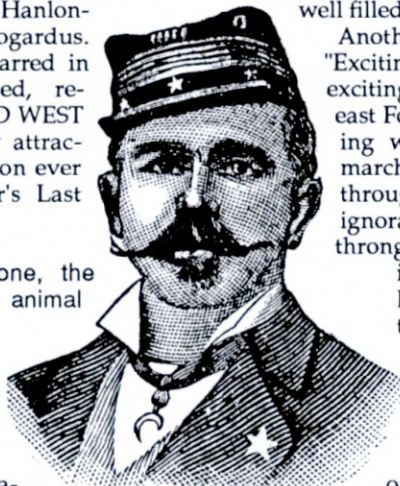
"Broadway contained the largest crowd in the history of Pittsburg, as it was one mass of humanity. The parade turned east at the corner of Rose and Locust and north on Locust to Sixth, west on Sixth to Broadway, and turned south passing through the throng of people to the show grounds.

"While the parade was passing dawn Broadway the street car came along going south, but was checked by the spectators standing in the middle of the track, and although the motorman rang the bell earnestly the crowd paid no attention, and Fred Ramsay, superintendent of the line, was compelled to walk in front of the car and notify the people to get off the track. Several women stood on the track until the car was within a few feet of them, and when they discovered their dangerous position, would scream and jump back, which with the display of the show parade was a circus well worth seeing. The most remarkable feature of the parade was that on a crowded street, and the street cars running through the throng, nobody was seriously injured.

Miss Millie Carlotta, Boone's assistant. Pfening Archives.

"Mr. Cooper, the owner of the Adam Forepaugh show, is the man whose enterprise and skill has made this show what it is to-day. The water-

proof canvas that covers many acres of ground at the south end of the street car line is a sight well worthy of a visit. The circus is continually being enlarged, and the show is a transient city in itself, providing for and maintaining no less than eight hundred persons and four hundred horses. Every thing is new and bright, and combines all the latest improvements.



"The street procession gave great satisfaction. It was remarked upon all sides that the horses were as fine as has ever been seen here; that the music was plentiful and good; the cages numerous and well ornamented; that there was variety enough to claim interest from start to finish. It was the best parade ever seen in Pittsburg.

"The same performance will be at night as in the day time."

Many houses were burglarized during the parade and the exhibitions.

"They broke into Chas. H. Hudson's house in Park Place, and it is not known how much they got, as Mr. Hudson and family are visiting in the east.

"The house of W. H. Yarcho, on Kansas avenue, was entered and several small articles taken. When they returned home they found the contents of their trunks and every drawer emptied on the floor, while the beds were tumbled up.

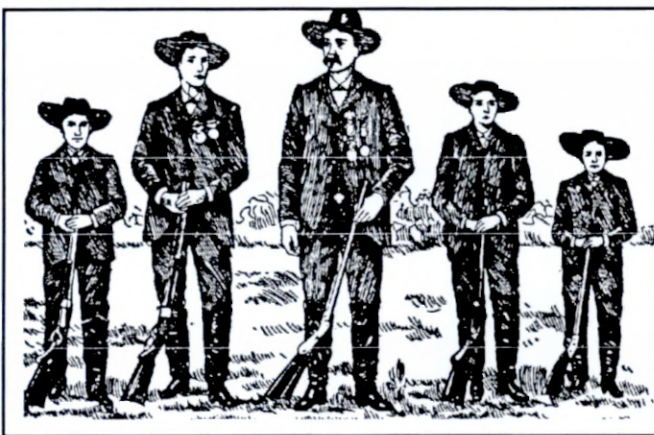
"N. B. Todd's house was also entered, but nothing was stolen.

"They resumed their work at night, entering the house of Mm. Rankin, on north Locust, between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Here they secured about \$40 in money, and jewelry valued at about \$200. . . . Mrs. Tandin was very much grieved over the loss, and fainted several times while telling the officers what was missing. Eight dollars of the money belonged to the Catholic priest and had been collected by Rankin. The burglars gained entrance into the houses through the windows.

"At about 12 o'clock the house of Howard Ogden, in the northeast part of the city, was entered by way of a window which was open. The burglars cut the screen and entered without waking the occupants, stole a fine silver watch and made their escape."

The *Headlight* concluded with the opinion that, "The next show that exhibits in this city will have a smaller attendance as everybody will remain at home to guard their houses." The *Weir City Tribune* reported that five special trains were run to Pittsburg to accommodate the crowd wanting to attend the Forepaugh show. The show moved on to Ft. Scott for exhibitions on August 6.

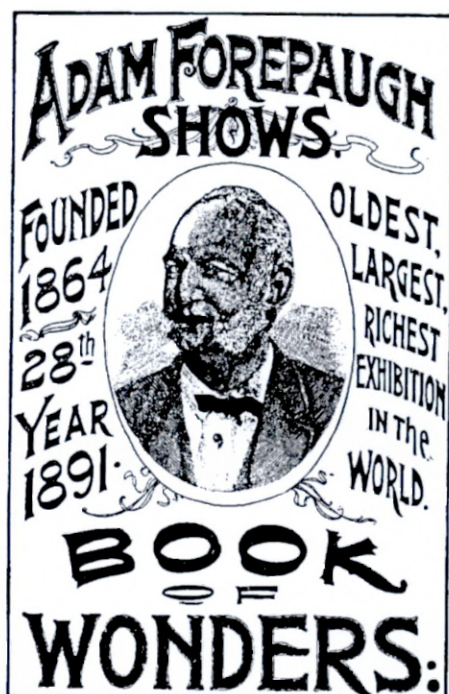
A handout in the *Topeka Kansas Democrat* on July 24 explaining how James E. Cooper was persuaded to lead the Great Forepaugh Shows through the season of 1891, is quoted below: "When the veteran Forepaugh realized that his earthly career was ending, his one thought and wish was the perpetuation of the name he had spent so many years in building up, and the preservation of the enormous show



Captain A. H. Bogardus and his sons. Pfening Archives.

properties that it represented. Of all men, there was but one whose experience, wealth and integrity made him available to assume charge of the show, and that was James E. Cooper. Though loath to emerge from his retirement and eminent social surroundings to enter that most active of avocations, the ownership and management of a great tented exhibition, Mr. Cooper could not refuse the wish of his dying friend, and so he took charge of the shows and the name of Forepaugh. While preserving all the material features of the Forepaugh shows of old, he has made many extensive additions thereto, and many innovations in respect to its conduct. Among those which

Cover of the 1891 Forepaugh courier. Pfening Archives.



would most attract public attention are the rules respecting the tone of the show, which has been brought up to the highest possible pitch. The seats are absolutely reserved for the audience, and no peddling is permitted. Neatness and politeness are exacted from all employees, and there is an apparent disregard for expense in not only making the audience comfortable but in entertaining them with the very best arenic attractions money may secure through out the world. And when it is also known that the tents are absolutely water-

proof, it seems as if nothing could prevent the attendance from being fully equal to the capacity beneath the canvas." In truth, Cooper was part owner, along with James A. Bailey and P. T. Barnum's estate.

On circus day in Topeka, August 8, George O. Starr, press agent and former news reporter, called on all the Topeka papers and paid the advertising bills. The *Topeka State Journal* reported, "Hot Day for the Circus.

"The Forepaugh shows are in Topeka to-day in all their glory and have attracted a great crowd of people. The show was at Rich Hill, Missouri, yesterday, where they gave only an afternoon performance and left early to get into Topeka on time this morning, but owing to the bad condition of the Missouri Pacific between Lomax and Topeka several cars got off the track and the show did not get here until almost 10 o'clock.

"Thousands of people stood on the streets in the boiling sun, waiting for the parade, which finally appeared between 1 and 2 o'clock headed by a new feature in circus parades—a drum corps and drum major. The parade was above the average, the herd of eleven elephants being a great attraction.

"A Topeka policeman attempted to arrest one of the clowns, for blocking the parade, and was hooted by the crowd.

"There is a large crowd at the circus this afternoon, and another big crowd is expected to-night.

"The circus will go to Kansas City over the Union Pacific and show there Monday."

A handout in the July 25 *Leavenworth Evening Standard* described the Ghost Dance as presented in the wild west segment of the Forepaugh show: "They are clad in a special garb for the occasion, a calico shirt [long like a night shirt], called by the Indians the 'holy coat.' There are various incantations and exhortations, and when they all cry out, 'the buffalo are coming,' they seize each others hands and go round and round in circles, half con-

fused, becoming wilder and wilder, till one after another they drop from exhaustion. The 'Medicine Men' say that the exhausted ones are making a visit to the great spirit, where they will meet the Messiah and all true friends who have gone before. This realistic illustration of this now famous Indian religious dance will be given at every exhibition of the Adam Forepaugh shows, in addition the most extensive wild west entertainment ever presented in the United States, as well as the other departments, the triple circus, huge menagerie, Roman hippodrome, famous foreign features, and all the other world renowned Forepaugh features, the whole making the Adam Forepaugh shows the greatest on earth."

The Leavenworth papers paid scant attention to the events of circus day, August 11. The parade was dampened by a short rain. The only happening that held the attention of the *Standard* was reported in the following paragraph: "During the circus parade this morning, one of the drivers of an animal cage was detained by a break down and the procession filed by him and finally left him. He succeeded, after some difficulty, in adjusting the break, and started, as he supposed, after the procession. In some manner he became bewildered by the streets and failed to connect with the procession at any point. He finally wandered up North Broadway and seeing the canvas on the reserve found himself after small boys, who discovered his predicament, had volunteered to pilot him."

The October 1 *Topeka State Journal* carried a story full of portent, but no follow up.

"Circus Conference. Big Proprietors and Managers of the Trust at Cincinnati.

"Cincinnati, October 1 The 'circus trust,' or the combination of the Barnum and Forepaugh shows, is having a meeting of its directors, managers, etc., at the Burnet today.

"They are arranging dates and other preliminaries for next season, making provisions for the proper distribution of the striped zebras and the queens of the bounding wire. Stopping at the Burnet are James E. Cooper, of Philadelphia; George Bleistein of Buffalo, the advertising man, and George O. Starr of Mount Vernon, Ohio, who puts in his time chasing novelties."

The November 1954 *White Tops* ran a property listing on the Forepaugh show for the season of 1891. No source is cited, but the information was in all probability taken from a route book:



Parade wagon illustration from the 1891 Forepaugh courier. Pfening Archives.

"Size of Canvas--Big top length 380 feet round top, 180 feet wide; 4 fifty foot middle pieces. Oblong, length 250 feet. Round top, 90 feet; 4 forty foot middle pieces. Side show, round top, 70 feet; one forty foot middle piece. Dressing room, round top, 70 feet; one forty foot middle piece.

"Show traveled 15,100 miles, length of season 175 days, gave 334 performances, missed 6 performances. Number of cars, 48; advance cars, 4; baggage horses, 173; ring horses, 94; ponies, 23; elephants, 15; camels, 6 and baggage wagons, 36.

In 1891 Ben Wallace brought to Kansas the most ruthless gang of thieves, bullies, gamblers, terrorists and generally despicable characters in the guise of entertainment that ever preyed upon the people of Kansas. Although Wallace learned much from his Kansas experience and modified his behavior in later years, it is evident that in 1891 he was, himself, a despicable character. No group of thugs can operate day after day on the show grounds without the consent and protection of the management.

No-chance "gambling" flourished on the Wallace show under the marquee, in the connection, menagerie and side show in full view of the local authorities. It required the intervention of the Kansas National Guard to put an end to Wallace's gangsters. The sordid story was published in the March-April 1984 *Bandwagon* under the title of "The World In a Nutshell: Wallace & Company 1890 and 1891."

This report will scarcely touch upon the violence, but will be directed to other aspects of the season of 1891 in Kansas.

Wallace & Co's Great World's 50-Cage Menagerie, Roman Hippodrome and International Three Ring Circus gave its first Kansas exhibitions of 1891 on

Wednesday, September 16, in Atchison. The event was generally ignored by the press.

Willie Sells' Colossal London Olympian Shows played Olathe on September 8, nine days ahead of Wallace & Company which was booked for Thursday, September 17. An advertisement on September 3 in the Olathe *Mirror* urged the public to "WAIT! WAIT! WAIT!" The two-column ad described the show as "Sublime and superior to Similitude, the acme of possible acquisition. of magnitude unrivaled and in every detail perfect."

The ad continued: "MONSTER MASSED MENAGERIE.

"Scenic, Gladiatorial and Processional Productions to delight the senses. Aviary of Birds of Bright Plumage from the Isles of Balm. Aquarium Curiosities from Cerulean Depths of Indian Seas. Three Rings with Wondrous Performers of Exalted Fame, who Dazzle Comprehension with Miraculous Feats of Superhuman Intrepidity or more than Terrestrial Grace. The Most Stupendous of Railroad Shows, aggregating incomparable Zoological Exhibits, Circus Adventures and the Hurdling Exploits of the Hippodrome. It is in truth and fact The Best Show In The World! Astounding the spectators and confounding all would-be Imitators. Invariably presenting all and everything that it advertises, and begging attempts of other and effete institutions to rise to its majestic plane. It remains a gigantic, unparalleled congregation of the rarities of animated nature of extraordinary creations contributed by all nations the Olympian sports which beguiled the classic hosts, the splendors of the Pageantry of Aurlian--Every feature on the same supremely superb scale. A cosmic centralization of irradiant effulgence.

"ROMAN SPORTS!!

Pageantry of the Coliseum.

[Engraving of Air Ship Chicago]

The Best Reproduction of the Entertainment of the Caesars Ever Given by Any Show on This Continent.

Matchless Equestrianism,

Gorgeous in All Appointments

Unequaled in Thrilling,

Electrifying Features.

The Finest Horses of Any Show on Earth!!!

Chariot Races,

Startling in Furious Chase, Daring Antique Performances of Horsemanship by Classic Riders.

Great Five-Horse

Tandem Hurricane Hurdle Run.

Processional Splendor.

Vespasian's Triumphal Exercises with their Inimitable & scenic grandeur.

Most Exciting Events of Any Show on this Mundane Sphere.

The Imperially Splendid Street Pageant "On the forenoon of Every Exhibition Day, indicates the Scope and Brilliancy of the Whole Majestic Show far better than mere diction, however florid or profuse, may picture it. All the People should see the parade, see the show, and so have a Royal Day's Outing."

The advertisement was illustrated with two engravings, one of which, positioned near the top of the ad, depicted liberty horses rearing up on high pedestals. The other illustration, used more extensively, showed "The Great Chicago Air Ship," a blimp shaped balloon pushed by a great propeller. If the "Great Chicago Air Ship" ever appeared in Kansas it was unnoticed by the press.

Following the exhibitions of the 17th the Olathe *Leader* reported that, "Wallace & Co.'s shows which exhibited here last Thursday was a very good one, and seemed to give general satisfaction except a few side shows which were gambling concerns, and caught some of our citizens for big sums of money. Mr. Bell was bled to the extent of \$550, and tried to get it back by attaching the concern and did get \$250 refunded."

In another column the *Leader* stated that, "Mr. Willis Cobb the press manager of Wallace & Co.'s show is one of the most clever, courteous and ingratiating showmen we have ever met. He spares no means to make it pleasant for those who patronize the performances."

The Olathe *Kansas Patron* also paid homage to Willis Cobb. "Through the kindness of Mr. W. Cobb, press agent of the company, a representative of the PATRON, with his friends, had the pleasure of visiting that colossal show in the afternoon and night. Mr. Cobb received us as his guests and very kindly showed us through the menagerie and as well as furnished seats in the large tent. Of the show we can say that it is strictly first-class."

The *Mirror* commented, "The Wallace Circus."

"By the courtesy of Mr. Willis Cobb, press agent, a representative of the MIRROR, his family and a few friends were kindly shown the mammoth show last Thursday. Both the menagerie and the circus were first class—the best ever seen in Olathe, while all departments were unexcelled; the horses showed superior training, showing almost human in-

telligence, and was, perhaps, the most interesting feature of the entertainment. The employees were all courteous, accomplished gentlemen, with whom it was a pleasure to meet, and the exhibition was all that was advertised. Their patronage was as liberal as it was deserving."

The above comments concerning Willis

contained a pair of the finest Royal Bengal tigers that, no doubt, are to be found in any show now travelling in America. . . . The cage of baby lions attracted a good deal of attention."

The story in the *Herald* concluded, "The circus was one of the nicest and cleanest travelling and was free from all manner of vulgarity, and another noticeable feature was the absence of fakes, pickpockets and thieves. They had the finest lot of horses we ever saw."

Was it part of Cobb's duties to keep the newsmen occupied and steer them away from the gambling?

An advertisement in the *Chanute Blade* for the exhibitions of September 19 provided further information on the magnitude of Wallace & Company and proclaimed the show to be: "The Largest and Most Faultless Union of Mighty Shows on Earth. Embracing all the Cardinal Features of the Amusement World. New Enlarged to fully FOUR times its former ventures. A Veritable Traveling City of Splendor with a Miraculous Population and an Opulent Wealth Unparalleled in the History of Amusements."

1000 People 1000.
300 Horses 300
90 Musicians 90
5 Brass Bands 5
10 Different Kinds of Music 10
300 Circus and Hippodrome Performers 300
100 Dazzling Acts 100
50 Cages and Dens of Animals 50
\$1,000,000 Invested in Menagerie
Alone \$1,000,000

ONE TICKET ADMITS TO ALL!

[Engraving of see-saw horses]

Cesar's Imperial Entree Into Rome

The Largest

DIAMOND Elephant on Earth.

\$10,000 Troupe of Performing Stallions!

The Largest and Most Exhaustive Zoological Exhibition on Earth!

Most Brilliant Grand and

Mighty Amusement Institution!

Every Morning at 10 O'clock the Most

Elaborate Scrumptious

FREE STREET PARADE!

That has ever Moved in Pomp and Glitter through any city in the world. One 50c Ticket Admits to All. Children under 9 Years 25c. Two Performances Daily Afternoon and Night Doors Open at 1 & 7 p.m. Performance Commences an Hour Later. The World's Greatest Show Positively WILL EXHIBIT AT CHANUTE, SATURDAY SEPT. 19th"

Front cover of the four page newspaper courier used by Wallace & Co. during the 1891 season. Pfening Archives.

Cobb were typical of his reception in every town on the route. Considering the plundering of the populace by the sharpers, it is a solid tribute to the skills of Cobb that the show was separated from the thieves in the eyes of the press. One should also remember that it was Cobb who paid the advertising bill in silver dollars from his little black bag.

The Ottawa *Herald*, referring to the exhibitions of September 18, devoted more space to Willis Cobb than to the show. Cobb "is genial, pleasant and one of the most accommodating press agents we ever met. He took us inside the ropes and as we followed from cage to cage we heard a lecture on natural history and nearly all members of the animal kingdom were represented. This menagerie

Following circus day the *Blade* reported that: "Wallace & Co's two-ring circus and menagerie, the great railroad show, exhibited in this city Saturday last to an immense audience both day and evening. The equipments are as fine as was ever seen in this state and the talent of the performers is of the best. We haven't room to go into detail and describe each act, but to say that those who attended were not (sic) pleased with what they saw would be putting their expressions very mild."

"Mr. Willis Cobb the press agent, is one of the most affable gentlemen it has ever been our pleasure to meet. It seemed to be his greatest desire that every one should see all there was to be seen. He was ever ready to answer all questions as was all the employees with whom we came in contact. The animals was the largest and finest collection ever seen in this section."

The ladies of Chanute's Christian church on show day served dinner and supper at 25¢ a plate.

The rail movements were personally supervised by Supt. Whisenand of the Santa Fe while the train was on his division.

Wallace & Company arrived in Coffeyville on Sunday for the exhibitions of Monday, September 21. The Coffeyville *News* noted that, "Quite a crowd followed the Wallace & Co's elephants to the Verdigris river Sunday evening to see them drink and bath. The huge beasts wallowed in the water like swine, and were as playful as kittens."

Coffeyville's Mayor Stansbury refused to issue licenses for fakirs following the show and City Attorney Kerchival was quick to close down the gamblers, but the *News* could still remark, "Oh, how the poor 'suckers' bit circus day, and didn't some of the old fellows get caught nicely? We really think they did."

"Our hotels and restaurants," according to the *News*, "were over-crowded circus day, and all did a rushing business."

The Coffeyville *Journal* carried the following: "On Sunday evening wagons and vehicles of all kinds commenced to roll into town from the south. After dark little camp fires could be seen burning here and there all over the city and others took quarters at the hotels. On Monday morning by 8:30 o'clock our streets were thronged with people and the uninformed would have surmised that something unusual was booked for the day. The unusual occurrence was the advent of the mammoth shows of Wallace & Co. Promptly at 10:00 the gorgeous pa-

rade began, headed by one of the finest bands to which it has ever been our good fortune to listen. They were followed by mounted acrobats in handsome costumes, sixteen large animal cars, two more bands, a steam calliope, three enormous elephants, camels and other rare quadrupeds. The parade was pronounced by all to be the best ever seen in Coffeyville.

"Through the-courtesy of Mr. Willis Cobb, press agent for the company, a representative of the JOURNAL, with his friends, had the pleasure of visiting the colossal show in the afternoon. Mr. Cobb received us as his guests and very kindly showed us through the menagerie and also furnished us seats in the large tent.

THE GREAT

CHICAGO AIR SHIP

In the Perfection of which the Mind of Man has ultimately mastered the Impossible and realized the World's Ambitions
Dreams and Desire for Power to navigate and explore

THE BOUNDLESS, SILENT ATMOSPHERIC SEA

REASON HAS BEEN WRECKED
The Light of every Brilliant Idea has been seen in the
"Chicago Air Ship" for the Discovery of



BUT GENIUS HAS TRIUMPHED
Proven: America's and the World's Longest Journey of Millions
of Miles in the Air, and the most successful and
THE AIR SHIP SAILS THE ETHER OCEAN

A blimp was pictured in the Wallace & Co. 1891 courier. Pfening Archives.

Of the show we can say that it is strictly first-class. . . . They have two hundred and fifty-five people and we can truthfully say they are each and all ladies and gentlemen. May the worthy company meet with the success everywhere that they did in this place. We will always keep a warm spot in our hearts for our friend Mr. Willis Cobb, Press Manager of Wallace & Co's shows, for the kind treatment received at his hands. He is one of the 'profesh' and knows how to sympathize with the poor overworked 'print.'"

Chalk up another scalp for Willis Cobb.

The Howard *Elk County Citizen* following the exhibitions of September 22 reported that: "By nine o'clock the town was a surging mass of humanity, and every point of vantage from which to see the 'grand parade' was taken. And it was a grand parade--the finest, we believe, that has ever visited this city. The chariots, vans and cages were all of superior construction, handsomely built and bright and new looking. The mammoth el-

ephants, (three of them) and the double humped camels were the chief attractions for the small boys, though the herd of Shetland ponies, their three bands and steam calliope divided their attention. The one hundred and sixty horses of the company are the finest we have seen in a circus here. The lion's, tiger's, leopard's, hyena's, yak, antelope, deer, etc., etc., attracted a great deal of attention, the baby lions only a few weeks old especially. The twenty-five cages of wild animals contained a big treatise on natural history in its most attractive form.

"The performance under the tent was a first class one as all who saw it agree, and so good a show deserves a few words of praise from the press, as the people are so often swindled by big promises and poor performances. Lack of space prevents us from speaking of it in detail, but the Fisher brothers performance, including the 'leap for life' was too good to pass over without a special notice, and the tight-rope man was the best we ever saw. The attendants and people about the show were all courteous and gentlemanly, and the entire performance was absolutely free from any objectionable features. If Wallace's circus again came to Howard, it will be given a cordial welcome."

The day was another triumph for Willis Cobb according to the Howard *Citizen*. "Wallace's show is peculiarly fortunate in having as press manager, that veteran in catering to the amusement loving public, Willis Cobb, who is known to newspaper men all over the United States. Mr. Cobb is not an old man, having only reached the fifty-fifth milestone in life's journey, but so long has he been before the American people, that he is regarded as almost a second Methuselah. Our first acquaintance with Mr. Cobb dates back to '68, and having met him several times since in business relations, we but feel that it is a pleasure to have him come around. To those newspaper men who have not met him, we cordially recommend him as a fair, honest business man, and a very pleasant gentleman socially. Success to him wherever he goes."

The Howard *Courant* was not as impressed as the *Citizen* but did comment that, "There have been larger shows here but none better. It took two trains to transport their effects, and everything they had was of the best and finest--good horses, fine vehicles, first-class performers, etc."

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera and Video, Topeka, Kansas.

CARSON & BARNES

Spectral Films

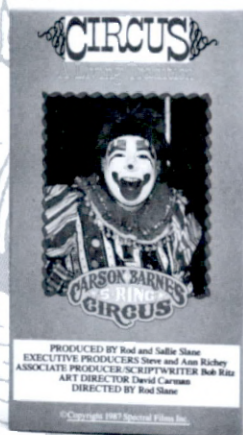
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Circus!

This close look at the Carson & Barnes Circus — the world's largest traveling big-top show — premiered on The Discovery Channel in 1988. Winner of the Bronze Medal at the 1987 International Film and Television Festival of New York, the 42-minute video shows performers working behind the scenes and in the spotlight.

An important, enduring slice of Americana, Carson & Barnes' intimate, old-fashioned, yet timeless travelling extravaganza, documents the circus people's devotion to their craft.



A Living Tradition!

Carson & Barnes is the only five-ring circus in the world. It plays in a different town each day, performing two or three shows daily, seven days a week from March to November, under the largest tent ever made.

Circus fans will want this valuable video which was originally released at \$79.95.

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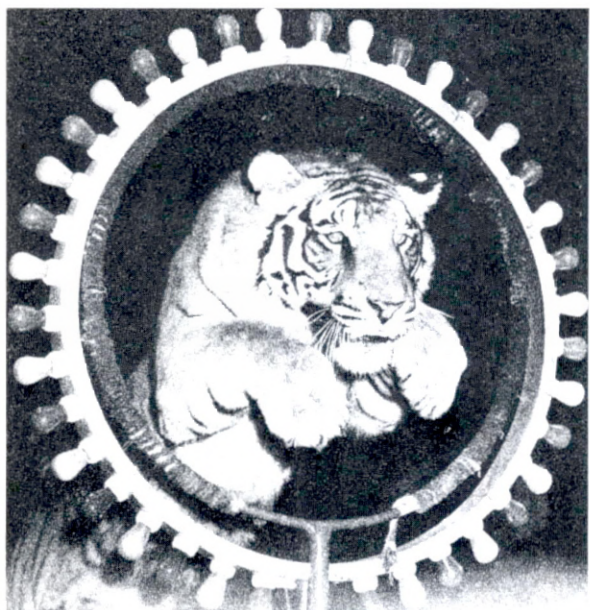
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FLA. RES. ADD 6% SALES TAX



20% discount to *Bandwagon* readers!

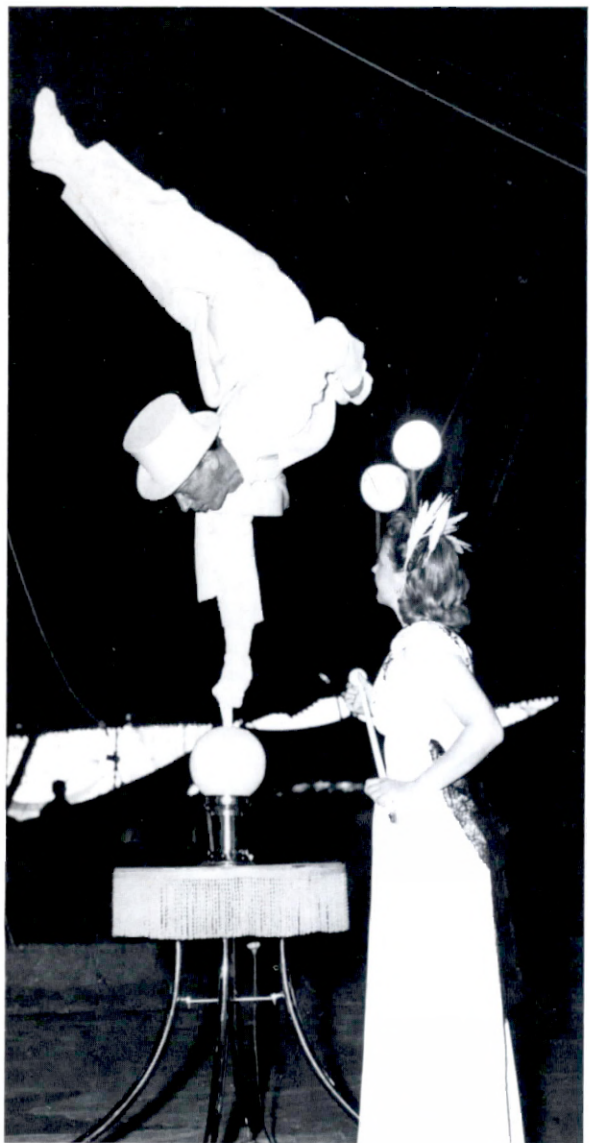
Big Top Boss

John Ringling North and the Circus

DAVID LEWIS HAMMARSTROM

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